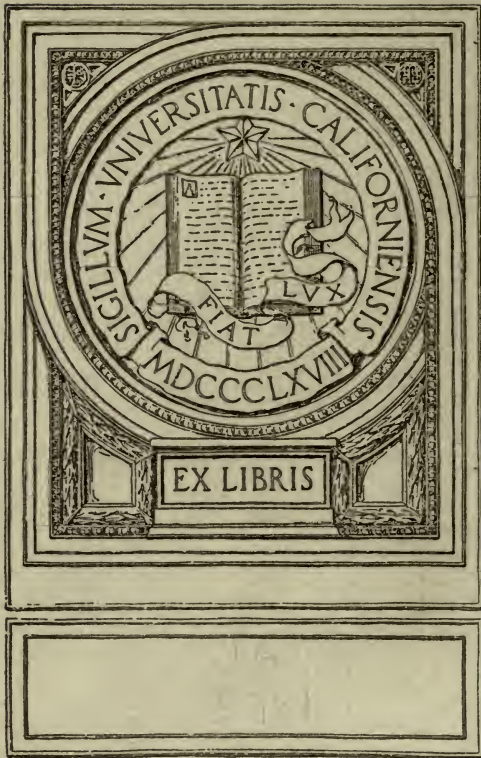


INTERPRETATION  
OF THE  
SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHY

J. GURNHILL









INTERPRETATION OF THE  
SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHY

*BY THE SAME AUTHOR*

**A Companion to the Psalter**, consisting of Introductions, Notes, and Meditations contributed as a Help to the Devotional use of the Psalms in Daily Public and Private Worship. Crown 8vo.

**Spiritual Philosophy**, considered in its Bearing on Science, Religion, and Psychology, and as affording a Key to some of the Problems of Evolution. 8vo.

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# INTERPRETATION OF THE SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHY

BY  
REV. CANON J. GURNHILL, B.A.

EMMANUEL COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

AUTHOR OF

"A COMPANION TO THE PSALTER," "THE SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHY," ETC.

"Flower in the crannied wall,  
I pluck you out of the crannies :  
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,  
Little flower—but if I could understand  
What you are, root and all, and all in all,  
I should know what God and man is."—TENNYSON.

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1920

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TO  
MY DEAR WIFE,  
IN GRATEFUL RECOGNITION OF MUCH VALUED HELP.

*Nov. 29th, 1919.*

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## PREFACE

Nothing strikes me as more remarkable about the reviews and criticisms of my book on Spiritual Philosophy than their wonderful diversity. According to some of my critics, the book contained nothing new or worthy of notice. According to others, there was subject-matter in it which called for lengthy and careful consideration. I thank them all for honouring me with their notice, but I shall beg to be excused from replying to their criticisms, with one exception. It is that which several of my reviewers have made; to the effect that my treatment of the subject, considering its magnitude and importance, and the number of questions and side issues it opens out, was too brief and sketchy.

I must plead guilty to the charge. It is quite true that my book was little more than a suggestive outline of the vast subject I ventured to discuss. But I would add in self-justification, that at a time when not only Civilization, but Philosophy and Religion are at the cross-roads, I felt it very important that the claims of the Spiritual Philosophy should not be overlooked.

And now my aim in publishing the present volume is, so far as I am able, to fill in the outline and remove some of the defects which might justly be urged against my former volume.

One word as to the title I have chosen.

We must not forget, that Philosophy, which I take in its broadest sense as the love of wisdom, is to a large extent the work and result of interpretation; interpretation, that is, of the truths and facts which form the subject-matter of our experience, whether in Nature or Revelation. Theory and speculation are by no means to be excluded as valuable aids in the quest and attainment of wisdom; but the theory and speculation that are not based on the facts of experience, or are not the reasoned and reasonable deductions from those facts, can be of little value.

I have chosen the title of Interpretation, therefore, because it will not only indicate the general purpose I have in view, which is to explain and expand the positions already laid down, but also, I hope, enable me to make some further contributions to this important subject of Spiritual Philosophy.

J. G.

EAST STOCKWITH VICARAGE,  
*September 3rd, 1919.*

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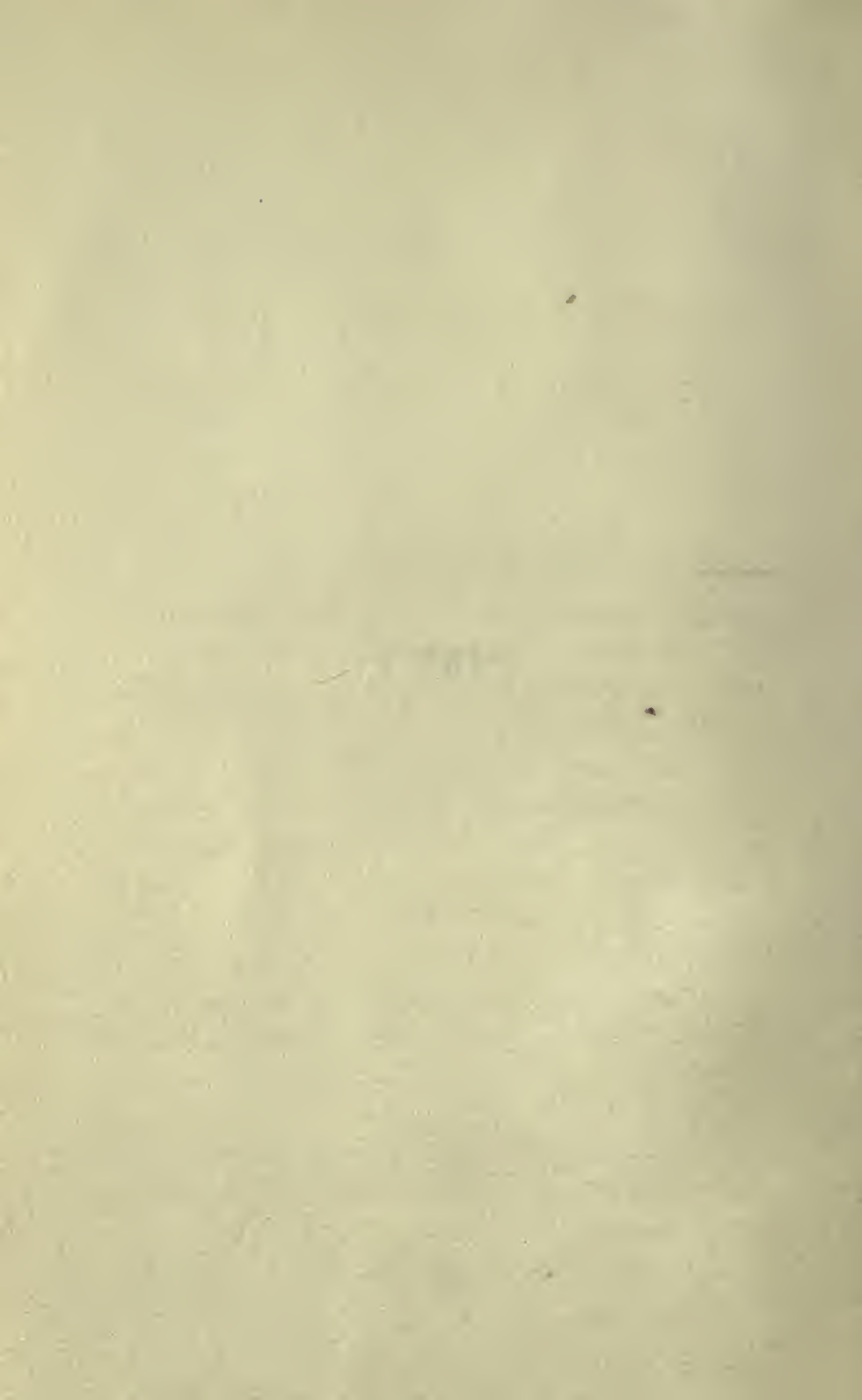
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## PART I



# INTERPRETATION OF THE SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHY

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

BISHOP WESTCOTT once took as the motto of one of his sermons on Christian Socialism the *dictum* of St. Augustine concerning the pilgrimage of the Israelites through the Wilderness of Sinai to the Promised Land, *Via illis fuit Visio Dei*, which the Bishop slightly altered, to make it more applicable to his subject, into *Via hominis Visio Dei*—the way of man is the Vision of God. If I had to choose a motto, which would best indicate that unity of design which I have endeavoured to keep before me in the present work, I should do the same. That *dictum* expresses a truth which has ever been repeating itself throughout the past history of the human race and will continue to do so to the end of time.

Nature, Human Nature, Incarnation, Redemption, Sanctification ; these are some of the illustrations of its truth ; some of the finger-posts which



mark the progress of Humanity in its pilgrimage through time to eternity. And it is the proper function of the Spiritual Philosophy, I take it, to follow and interpret the *Via Hominis*, in the successive stages of its journey, and to show how they have ever been attended and rewarded by a clearer Vision of God, and a nearer approach of the Human to the Divine.

In short, my object in this present volume has been to trace the gradual growth and development of the spiritual and religious concept of God, and His purpose concerning mankind. I believe that this concept, both in its origin and development, has been due to the immanent Spirit of God working by the method and process of evolution first in Nature, secondly by more direct spiritual agencies, but lastly and chiefly through the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, and all that it implies. Such has been my general purpose. And the working of it out is the thread which I hope will give unity and coherence to my task.

## CHAPTER II

DR. SORLEY ON CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY. WHAT IS IT?

Creative Evolution—Another method.

DR. SORLEY, Professor of Moral Philosophy in Cambridge University, said in his Address at the Cambridge Church Congress, 1910, that "there did not exist at the present time any living systematized body of Christian Philosophy. But it had not always been so. In the early days of the Fathers there were more than the beginnings of a Christian Philosophy—in Origen and Augustine, for example. In the thirteenth century we had a system, dominating the whole realm of knowledge, in Scholasticism. Then quite recently we had a Christian Philosophy in Oxford, which T. H. Green put forward. We could not now go back to Scholasticism nor to Hegel or T. H. Green. They must work out things by themselves. And the thought of Christian men was anxiously looking for the building up of some such system, as would do for us what Scholasticism did for past generations."<sup>1</sup>

I was much struck with the truth of these

<sup>1</sup> *Guardian*, Oct. 7, 1910, p. 1405.

remarks, and I may safely say they had not a little to do with my attempt to supply the defect, in however small a measure, by the publication of my sketch of "The Spiritual Philosophy," which appeared a few years ago.

#### EXAMINATION OF DR. SORLEY'S STATEMENT

If it be true, that at the present time we have no accredited system of Christian Philosophy, what is the reason? Is it, that Christianity has no need of philosophy; that its time and attention have been so fully and exclusively taken up with matters of a purely religious character such as the definition of theological dogmas, or the elaboration of ecclesiastical rules and ordinances, that philosophy has come to be regarded as a matter of secondary importance? Or is it that Christianity has been deemed incapable of philosophical treatment; in other words, that it lies outside the range of philosophic thought?

If either of these suppositions be the true reason why there is at the present time no accredited system of Christian Philosophy, the result is not one for congratulation. For, if Christianity lies outside the pale of philosophy, then the same objection may be urged against all religion. But this, I imagine, no sane person would admit. And Christianity, dealing as it does, not only with matters of personal conduct



and belief, but also with great metaphysical and psychical problems, is necessarily brought within the domain of philosophy.

If philosophy is possible at all, there must be a philosophy which is broad and deep enough to embrace and deal with the claims which Christianity makes on reason and faith, and either to confirm or refute them.

### CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY

But are we sure we are agreed as to what is meant by Christian Philosophy?

The following would seem to be some of the principal demands which such a philosophy must satisfy.

It must be no artificial system, made in order to support and impart a quasi philosophic sanction to the distinctive doctrines or dogmas of the Christian Faith. At the same time it must be such a system as orthodox Christians can accept; because not only is there nothing antagonistic to their Faith, but because it can show that the theological, ethical and spiritual elements are congruous and logical results.

It must also, as Hoffding says in his "Philosophy of Religion," be conservative of all real values.

That is to say, it must (1) be based on truth and reality, wherever they are to be found, and

(2) be competent to reconcile the claims of Science with those of Religion as taught by Christianity.

Hence it must be of the animistic and spiritual order in contradistinction to the materialistic and mechanical.

It must adopt for one of its axioms, that between natural and revealed religion there can be no permanent and irreconcilable discrepancy or hiatus when both are rightly understood; because both are modes of the Self-manifestation of God, and both profess to be seeking after truth. Such, as it seems to me, must be the main outline and chief characteristics of that Philosophy which is deserving of the name Christian, and can be accepted by the followers of Christ.

Can such a philosophy as this be found? I venture to think it can. And what it is, I have endeavoured to outline in my book on "The Spiritual Philosophy."

#### RECAPITULATION

For the sake of those who are not acquainted with the book, I will very briefly recapitulate the method and line of argument adopted in support of the conclusions I sought to establish.



CREATIVE EVOLUTION <sup>1</sup>

1. If there be a Creator, the method of creation adopted is that of evolution or development by minute and continuous changes.

I did not assume the truth of this proposition, because it is now generally admitted as a fact capable of scientific and historical proof.

2. I availed myself of the valuable labours of that great naturalist, the late Professor Romanes, in the field of biology and vital evolution.

And I gave an abbreviated conspectus of the main conclusions arrived at in the form of a diagram.

3. I then endeavoured to show that the psychic and spiritual side of human nature was susceptible of the same treatment; that the evolutionary method held good in the psychical as in the physiological department of human life. And here, too, I presented, in the form of a second diagram, a summary of the results and values secured—that is, the self-conscious, personal, moral and spiritual soul of man.

<sup>1</sup> Speaking of the place of Evolution in Modern Christian Philosophy, Dr. A. E. Garvis, Principal of New College, Hampstead, thus writes :

“When we look at Evolution more closely we see that it is the counterpart in time of the unity of Nature in space: and unity and continuity are ideas that properly go together. It is causality on the cosmic scale, with the idea of progress added as an interpretative principle of the process.”

## ANOTHER METHOD

But another method of procedure is also possible, which will bring us to the same point and the same conclusion.

We may start from results and work back to causes. We may assume nothing, and take nothing for granted, save what is guaranteed to us by actual experience of what Man is, as we know him to be.

In short we may commence with the personal questions, "What am I?" "How came I to be what I am?" "and for what purpose?"

And then, by the light which our endeavour to answer these questions would give, we might proceed by synthesis to build up a system of Philosophy. It is along these lines that the present investigation will in the main be conducted.

But let us look a little more closely into these questions.

What am I?

Whatever else I may be, I know I am a self-conscious, personal, rational being.

I possess bodily senses and faculties by which I am brought into touch with my surroundings, and enabled to act with reference to them.

I am endowed with mental and logical faculties by which I can reason upon, and draw inferences from, the phenomena perceived through my senses.

Nor does all this by any means represent the

whole content of my being. I find there is another department of my nature, which I will call the ethical and psychical element, by which I become conscious of moral distinctions, and spiritual realities, including the large and important body of religious experiences.



## CHAPTER III

### WHAT IS LIFE ?

Professor Bergson and Dr. MacDougall—Category of Consciousness—Professor A. I. Thomson—Table of Consciousness.

WHAT is Life ? The question is one of such unspeakable interest and importance ; so much has already been said, and so much yet remains to be said ; it is one which has so many departments, and ramifications, and side issues, that we almost fear to enter on the discussion of it. At the same time, it is one which comes home so closely to every man, who wishes to know something more about himself and his future, that we feel bound at least to consider what is the view and attitude of the Spiritual Philosophy with regard to it ?

What, then, is Life ? According to Dr. Murray<sup>1</sup> the root of the word is the Aryan *leif*, *lif*, the general meaning of which is *to continue, last, endure*.

What has Herbert Spencer to say ?

“Life is definable as the continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations, and when we so define it, we discover that the physical and psychical life are equally comprehended by the definition.”

<sup>1</sup> English Dictionary, *s.v.*

Dr. Hans Driesch, Professor of Philosophy in the University of Heidelberg, in his "History and Theory of Vitalism,"<sup>1</sup> regards Life as a method of *becoming*. But his work appears to me too metaphysical and speculative to be of much assistance to the ordinary lay reader.

Nevertheless, I think we have reason to be thankful to Dr. Driesch for his treatise, because, while of a purely scientific and metaphysical character and holding aloof from the moral, religious and theological aspect of life, it is not antagonistic to the view which the Spiritual Philosophy leads us to take. Whatever else the Professor's work may be, it is the admission by one whose claims to our respect as a scientific biologist are beyond dispute that life is teleological, and that neither mechanism nor materialism nor chemistry is competent to explain and solve its mysteries.

<sup>1</sup> "At the beginning of the last half century," says Dr. W. McDougall in "Body and Mind," p. 252, "the dominant note of biological thought was one of confident anticipation of the ultimate and indeed rapid solution of the major problems of biology in mechanical terms, and though in the earlier part of that period Vitalism was commonly spoken of as a thing of the past, a mere survival from the Dark Ages, to-day Vitalists are again numerous among the biologists. They are beginning to see and confess that mechanical conceptions are insufficient to explain the phenomena of life, which contain some undefined factor not to be described in terms of physics and chemistry."

Dr. Merz, the champion of Mechanism, admits that its advocates had not come nearer to a solution of the question "What is Life?" and that "the spectre of a vital principle still lurks behind all our terms."

What has Bergson to say about Life ?

He calls it the *Elan vital*, i.e. a thrust or energetic movement, and he speaks of it thus :

“This movement constitutes the unity of the organized world—a prolific unity of an infinite richness, superior to any that the intellect could dream of, for the intellect is only one of its aspects or products.”<sup>1</sup> And Evolution is a creation that goes on for ever by virtue of this initial movement.

But none of these pronouncements throw much light on the question “What is Life ?”—life in its real essential nature. Nor ought this to cause us any surprise. For Life is like many other mysterious phenomena we meet with in Nature, which are only cognizable to us by their attendant results. This is especially true of some of the different kinds of mechanical force and physical energy. What, for example, is the force of gravity? We may call it one of the laws of Nature, but this explains nothing. We can observe it and measure it and use it, but we are as far as ever from penetrating the secret of its power. So also with the electric and magnetic currents, and the all-pervading ether ;

<sup>1</sup> “Creative Evolution,” p. 110.

The following is Mr. Balfour's comment on Bergson's “Creative Evolution.” “He draws a picture of the *Elan vital*—the principle of life—forcing its way along different paths of organic evolution, some without issue or promise of progress, others leading on through regions hitherto untraversed to ends remote and unforeseen.”—“Theism and Humanism,” p. 240.



and so, too, must it be with Life and its intrinsic character. If we would know anything more about it we must gain that knowledge from the observation and study of its manifestations and concomitant results. And if we should discover any one quality, or attribute more uniformly present and characteristic than all others, then we should imitate the miner who patiently follows the vein of gold, in hope that it will bring him at last to the auriferous rock.

Is there, then, any leading characteristic feature of Life which may serve our turn in this respect? I venture to think there is. And that feature is *consciousness*. Indeed, I think it is more.

### THE CATEGORY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Consciousness is the category under which Life in all its forms and grades can best be classified and studied. For there is no vital organism in which consciousness in a higher or lower degree is not present.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Life," says Bergson, "is consciousness launched into matter: availing itself of a slight elasticity in matter, and using matter for its own purposes."

His metaphysical theory is that a broad current of consciousness penetrates matter, carrying matter to organization.

"Consciousness," writes Prof. A. J. Thomson, "is at the origin of life, and appears as the motive power of evolution," but without entirely endorsing Bergson's view, he makes the following suggestion:—"Under the sway of his evolutionary ideas the biologist finds it difficult to entertain the hypothesis of consciousness being launched into matter as a bolt from the blue. May it not have been that the

In the earliest and lowest forms of life, such as the protozoa and infusoria, it may appear to be little more than reflex action. But even here there are the rudiments of consciousness, showing itself in a perception of the contents of their environment, and the power to choose from among them those elements most conducive to their maintenance and development. But what is true of the lowest is still more true of all succeeding and higher forms of animal life. "From the amœba, which thrusts out its *pseudopodia* at random to seize the organic matter scattered in a drop of water, up to the higher animals, which have sense organs with which to recognize their prey, locomotor organs to go and seize it, and a nervous system to co-ordinate their movements with their sensations, in all these without exception consciousness is present, and forms the one permanent distinction between the organic and inorganic world."

Nor must we suppose either that the vegetable world forms an exception to the universal rule. Here, too, consciousness is to be found, though differing in degree from that possessed by animal organisms, and such as might be more correctly termed unconscious consciousness.

It is not, however, till we come to Man, the most perfect product, the very *chef d'œuvre* of

*Anima Animans* has been with creation through and through, and been first to last?—"The Wonder of Life," p. 642.

the evolutionary system, that we find the most convincing proof that Life is consciousness.

It was a mighty step in advance when the conscious psyché of the animal developed into the self-conscious soul of man. But it was even more than this. It was a stepping-stone to the attainment of higher vital values and forms of consciousness. "With Man," says Prof. A. J. Thomson, "a new freedom begins. Consciousness is breaking its chains. How free it may become who shall say?"<sup>1</sup>

It was a step which raised man to a position of pre-eminence from which he could peer into the realms of metaphysical truth and reality. And in him we see how consciousness, beginning and for a long time confined within the limits of physical life, expanded upwards and outwards till it reached the moral, religious and spiritual spheres of thought and activity.

With the development of the conscious animal psyché into the self-conscious spirit, the soul of man became a personality. And of all vital phenomena of which we have any actual experience the human personality is beyond question the greatest.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The Wonder of Life," p. 642.

<sup>2</sup> "Personality, involving as necessary qualities of its being reason, will, love, is incomparably the highest phenomenon known to experience, and as such has to be related with whatever is above it and below it by any philosophy based on experience."—R. C. Moberly, Church Congress, 1891.



In the following table I have endeavoured to indicate the successive increments of consciousness, which have attended the progress of biological evolution.

### TABLE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

#### TABLE ILLUSTRATING THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Lowest and earliest forms of Life, in which consciousness seems little more than reflex action, but is latent and nascent as yet. *Diatoms, Infusoria, Amœbæ, etc.*

Consciousness in the Vegetable and Animal World, but where it has not as yet attained the higher grade of Self-consciousness. This might not incorrectly be termed the Stage of Unconscious Consciousness.

Consciousness in Man assumes the form of Self-consciousness, which constitutes the basis of the Human Personality, which in turn becomes the seed-bed of further specific forms of consciousness; namely—

- (a) *Moral or Ethical*, i.e. the power to discriminate between good and evil, right and wrong.
- (b) *Æsthetic*, showing itself in the concept of the beautiful and the lovely; of harmony and proportion and contrast.
- (c) *Religious*. By this we understand the recognition of some personal Power in Nature superior to Man himself, which therefore has claims to his reverence, respect and worship. To Nature herself in the first instance as the visible manifestation of that personal Supreme Being the rise and origin of the religious consciousness or sentiment was due. Eventually, owing to its universal character, it became instinctive and found its expression and embodiment in the countless forms of religious belief and worship. First of Pantheism, afterward of Polytheism, finally Monotheism.
- (d) *Spiritual*. The consciousness of a Divine Spirit pervading, and immanent in the whole Universe, who is not only

Himself the Supreme Consciousness, but also the Author and Giver of life and consciousness to every creature which possesses them.

Thus Spirit is the very synthesis of all life. It is the link which binds the creature to the Creator, which teaches the affinity of the soul of Man with the Being of God, and presents the ground and possibility of union and communion between the Human and Divine.

## CHAPTER IV

### LIFE—*continued*

#### Personality and Environment.

PERSONALITY is the peculiar prerogative of man, and the attribute, not of the psyché, which he possesses in common with other animal organisms, but of the soul, or spirit, to which he alone can lay claim.

And this view of the subject enables us to integrate and correlate the whole process of mental and spiritual evolution, from its earliest beginnings in reflex action and aneuric consciousness, to its higher development in self-consciousness and moral and religious perception.

#### PSYCHIC AND SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION

Life, according to our definition, is consciousness, and by consciousness we understand the power to perceive and respond to environment.

Here then we have two factors: (*a*) the perceiving subject or agent, and (*b*) the object perceived, *i.e.* the environment. And the two are mutually related.



## ENVIRONMENT

But what do we mean by environment in this connection? Of course it hardly need be pointed out that environment has a different meaning for every form of life. The environment of an amoeba or an earth-worm will be very limited compared with that of an eagle or a lion. And the environment of these latter in turn will be greatly inferior to the environment of a man. And, generally speaking, the environment of different organisms will vary according to their biological development.

In itself the environment is unlimited, for it is nothing less than the Universe, in which we live and move and have our being.

But how are we to define the Universe? We cannot. Because it is infinite, not only in spatial extent, but also in its content; its content not only physical and material but metaphysical and spiritual. And it is this infinite environment, which acting as an inexhaustible stimulus on the responsive power of the organism supplies the possibility of an indefinite and, it may be, an endless progress towards perfection.

The lower forms of consciousness met with in plants and animals are succeeded in man, through the faculty of apperception, by higher and higher forms. The power is acquired of translating *percepts* into their corresponding *concepts*. Phenomena

beget noumena, and Nature becomes the storehouse of divine ideas.

According to the teaching of the Spiritual Philosophy, this infinite Universe is nothing else than the Body of the Transcendent Deity, created by His Word, or Logos, which is the dynamic expression of His Will and animated by the Spirit of Wisdom Who is the Lord and Giver of life, and "sweetly ordereth all things"

Such is man's environment. And creative evolution has for its object the production of creatures conscious in ever growing measure of the contents of that environment, and according to that measure capable of responding to it.

The process goes forward. The stage of religious and moral consciousness is reached, and the soul become conscious of spiritual truth and reality.

Such in briefest outline is the process of psychic evolution by which man has attained to his present position of supremacy in the scale of life.

And such I imagine must be the answer, which the inquiring mind of man must give to the questions with which we started: What am I? How came I to be what I am? But the last question, "For what purpose have I been placed here?" is one of such magnitude and importance, that only a more careful study of the religious history of mankind can give us a correct and sufficient answer.

## CHAPTER V

### THE SACRED WRITINGS OF CHALDEA AND BABYLON

- (a) Magical Texts, (b) Hymns to the gods, (c) Penitential Psalms and Litanies—Concept of sin—Evolution of Religious Consciousness from Astral Theology to Divine Worship.

As illustrating the birth and development of the religious sentiment and consciousness, and its bearing on the Spiritual Philosophy viewed from the Christian standpoint, it will be well to take a brief survey of some two or three of the early forms of religious belief and philosophy.

I have selected the following systems as best suited for my purpose :

(1) The system embodied in the ancient Accadian and Babylonian sacred literature.

(2) The philosophy of Plotinus as expressed in his famous "Hypostases and Enneads."

(3) The system of Cosmic Philosophy, and more particularly as taught and defended by the late John Fiske, of Harvard University.

Each one of these has been brought into relation with the Spiritual Philosophy, whether in support of, or in opposition to it.

I shall, therefore, now invite my reader's attention to that important step in psychic and



spiritual evolution, of which we find one of the earliest examples in the sacred books of ancient Chaldea. I do this for several reasons. First, because I believe the races that inhabited that country, *i.e.* the ancient Accadians and Babylonians, were the earliest of which we have any authentic historic records reaching back, as they do, to between two and three thousand years B.C. Secondly, because whatever may have been the genealogy of the earlier Accadian race, they were succeeded and apparently absorbed by the Semitic race of whom the Babylonians and Hebrews were branches. Thirdly, because their religious history and sacred literature is well fitted to illustrate the early origin and growth of the religious instinct and consciousness. Fourthly, because in their sacred scripts we cannot fail to observe marks of affinity with Jewish hymnody, both in regard to expression and theology.

All these points will come out with greater distinctness as we proceed.

These sacred writings consist of three classes :

(1) Magical Texts.

(2) Sacred Hymns to the gods.

(3) Penitential Psalms and Litanies.

The hymns were all of Semitic origin, the race from which the Hebrews and Jews, who claim Abraham for their Father, were descended. It should also be borne in mind, that not only in race and language was there a close affinity

between the Babylonians and Hebrews, but also, as is now well known, between the sacred literature of the two peoples. Indeed, the sacred hymns and litanies of the Baylonians may almost be regarded as the prototypes and models of the Jewish hymnology.

The very order, chronologically, of the Babylonian texts—first, Magical Texts; secondly, Hymns to the gods, and thirdly, the Penitential Psalms—is itself a striking illustration of the gradual development of the religious consciousness in these ancient peoples.

Moreover, the value of these sacred writings of Chaldea and Babylon is still further enhanced when we remember how closely they are connected with our own sacred Scriptures. For instance, the Sabbath and week of seven days had its first home in Babylon. Our own Mosaic record of Creation, if not of Babylonian origin, presents some striking marks of affinity, and points to an earlier tradition of which both the Babylonian and Mosaic records were different versions, transmitted through different channels. The earliest mention of this tradition is to be found in the Babylonian inscriptions, and we have no equally early documents amongst the Mosaic records. But these latter may, nevertheless, go back to an immemorial antiquity, when the Israelites (Hebrews) and the Semitic Babylonians lived side by side. The similarity, and

yet the diversity, between the Babylonian and Hebrew records is very striking.

### ASTRO-THEOLOGY

The religion to which the Astro-Theology of the ancient Accadians and Babylonians gave rise as exemplified in their sacred literature, their hymns and litanies, possesses a peculiar interest for those who, like ourselves, are seeking to trace the evolution and growth of the religious instinct and consciousness in mankind. Not only because the Hebrews belonged to the great Semitic family, which appears at a very early date to have invaded Babylonia, and disputed with the inhabitants the possession of the land; nor yet because of the striking resemblance between the sacred devotional literature of the Babylonians and Hebrews. But because in the religious belief and worship of the Accadians and Babylonians we see the religious concept passing beyond the stage of Magic and Nature worship, and beginning to assume a higher moral and spiritual character.

“The religion of the Accadians,” says Dr. Sayce, “was originally Shamanistic; and the abandonment of it for a purer faith seems to have been due to the influence of their Semitic (and Hebrew) invaders.” The struggle between the two races appears to have been carried on for



a considerable time with varying success. But at length the Semites gained the upper hand.

The Accadian tongue was displaced by the Semitic in colloquial speech, and only survived, like Greek and Latin, for literary purposes, or was used by the Priesthood in the recitation of their sacred offices.

#### FIRST CLASS OF BABYLONIAN SCRIPTS—MAGICAL TEXTS

##### *A few Examples*

##### (1)

“O Spirit of the lady of the magic wand, throne-bearer of the earth, conjure !

O Spirit of the seven doors of the earth, conjure !

O Spirit of the seven bolts of the earth, conjure !

O Spirit of the opening fire-god, opener of the earth, conjure !

O Spirit of the strong goddess with the cup of blessing, wife of the plague-demon, conjure !”

##### (2) INCANTATION AGAINST MADNESS

“The disease of the head coils like a serpent in the desert, like a wind it blows.

Like the lightning it lightens ; above and below it has wrought destructions.

Against the sick man it turns its front, and like the day it overpowers him.

This man it smites, and the man, like one who is faint at heart, staggers

Like one whose heart is taken from him, he passes away.

Take the skin of a suckling, that is still ungrown,  
And bind with it the head of the sick man,

May the sickness of the man's head which is produced in  
the street be removed.

O Spirit of heaven, conjure !

O Spirit of earth, conjure !”

(3) The first nineteen lines of the next spell are destroyed.

“ Merodach ! Substance of myself ! Go, my son !

Take the skin of a suckling that is still ungrown ;

Let the wise woman bind it to the right hand, and double  
it on the left,

Bind the knot seven times ;

Lay upon it the spell of Eridu,

Bind the head of the sick man ;

Bind the neck of the sick man ;

Bind his life ; bind firmly his limbs ; approach his bed ;

Pour over him the magical waters.

May the disease of the head, like the eye when it rests  
itself, ascend to heaven

Like the waters of an ebbing flood, to the earth may it  
descend,

May the word of Ea issue forth. May Dav-Kina direct,

O Merodach, first-born of the deep, thou canst make  
prosperous.”

#### (4) INCANTATION

“ Seven are they, seven are they,<sup>1</sup>

In the hollow of the deep seven they are ;

Gleams of the sky are those seven.

In the hollow of the deep, in a palace they grow up.

Male they are not, female they are not.

They are whirlwind-like ghosts : travellers are they,

Wife they possess not, child they beget not,

Compassion and kindness know they not,

Prayer and supplication hear they not.

Evil are they, evil are they !

Seven are they, seven are they, seven twice again are they.

O Spirit of heaven, conjure. O Spirit of earth, conjure.”

<sup>1</sup> Sayce, p. 475.

SECOND CLASS OF BABYLONIAN SCRIPTS—HYMNS  
TO THE GODS

It will have been evident to the reader that in the Magical Texts there was very little of what might fairly be called religious consciousness, and what there was, was of a very primitive and rudimentary character.

When we come, however, to the second class of Chaldean scripts, the Hymns to the gods, the case is very different. In the former the unseen world was peopled by a vast number of spirits, good and evil, but chiefly evil, who had to be propitiated or exorcised by charms or spells, or incantations. But the concept of sin, on the one hand, and morality on the other, had not yet been awakened. In the Hymns and Litanies all this is changed. In many the worshipper approaches his deity under a keen sense of his sins and shortcomings, both known and unknown, and utters earnest heartbroken prayers for pardon and deliverance. Though there were still lords many and gods many which claimed and shared his allegiance and devotion, *e.g.* Bel and Mero-dach, Istar and Samas, yet there was a growing tendency to reduce their number, and invest one or other of them with the attributes of supremacy and transcendence. Thus it came to pass that in some cities and localities the Sun worship prevailed, while in others not far remote the Moon



was the more popular object of worship. We must not suppose, however, that in either case the worship was necessarily of a heathenish or idolatrous character. On the contrary, some of the Hymns, as for example that to Father Nannar, bear witness to a religious consciousness of such a highly spiritual, not to say sublime, nature, that they might without incongruity find their place amongst the Nature Psalms of the Hebrew or Jewish Psalter, such as Psalms xix. and civ. But they would be Nature Psalms in the sense that they had come to be regarded as bearing witness to a Supreme Deity who is the Author and Sustainer of Nature, and as helping and teaching men to rise from Nature up to Nature's God.

The gods of the Babylonian Pantheon were very numerous. Consequently the Hymns addressed to them form a very large class of sacred compositions. Moreover, it is noteworthy that the very names of the gods, to whom the Hymns are addressed, are not always constant, but are exchanged for others. Thus, for example, Nannar, to whom one of the most beautiful of the Hymns was originally addressed, was afterwards worshipped as Sin.

I give the following specimens of these Hymns.

#### (1) HYMN TO THE SUN-GOD

“ O Sun-god, on the horizon of heaven thou dawnest !  
The pure bolts of heaven thou openest.  
The doors of heaven thou openest.

O Sun-god, thou liftest up thy head to the world.  
 O Sun-god, thou coverest the earth with the bright firmament of heaven ;  
 Thou settest the ear to the prayers of mankind."

(2) ANOTHER HYMN TO THE SUN-GOD

"O Sun-god, the supreme judge of the world art thou.  
 O lord of the living creation, the pitiful one, who directest the world.  
 O Sun-god, on this day purify and illumine the King, the son of his god ;  
 Let all that is wrought of evil, which is in his body be removed elsewhere.

With Anu and Mul-lil

Direct the law of the multitudes of mankind.  
 Thou art eternal righteousness in the heaven.  
 Thou art justice, even the bond of the ears of the world  
 Thou knowest right, thou knowest wickedness.  
 O Sun-god, righteousness has lifted up its foot.  
 O Sun-god, wickedness has been cut as with a knife.  
 O Sun-god, the judge supreme of heaven and earth art thou."

My next and last example is the beautiful Hymn to Father Nannar. A special interest attaches to this Hymn from the fact that Nannar was the name of the Moon-god worshipped at "Ur of the Chaldees," the native city of Terah and Abraham. Hymns were composed in his honour and formed part of the ritual of the celebrated Temple of Ur. Thanks to the piety of the chief scribe of Assur-bani-pal, one of these hymns has been preserved to us in almost perfect condition. It runs as follows :—



## HYMN TO FATHER NANNAR

1. Lord and prince of the gods, who in heaven and earth alone is supreme !
2. Father Nannar, lord of the firmament, prince of the gods !
3. Father Nannar, lord of heaven, prince of the gods !
4. Father Nannar, lord of the moon, prince of the gods !
5. Father Nannar, lord of Ur, prince of the gods !
6. Father Nannar, lord of the temple of mighty light, prince of the gods !
7. Father Nannar, who biddest the crowned disk to rise, prince of the gods !
8. Father Nannar, who makest the crowned disk fully perfect, prince of the gods !
9. Father Nannar, who sweeps away with a blow invincible, prince of the gods !
10. Strong ox, whose horn is powerful, whose limbs are perfect !
- . . . . .
12. Merciful one, begetter of the universe, who founds his illustrious seat among living creatures !
13. Father, long-suffering and full of forgiveness, whose hand upholds the life of all mankind !
13. Lord, thy divinity, like the far-off heaven, fills the wide sea with fear.
14. On the surface of the peopled earth he bids the sanctuary be placed ; he proclaims their name.
15. Father, begetter of gods and men, who causes the shrine to be founded, who establishes the offering,
16. Who proclaims dominion, who gives the sceptre, who shall fix destiny into a distant day.
17. First-born, omnipotent, whose heart is immensity, and there is none who may discover it.
18. Firm are his limbs, his knees rest ! he opens the path of the gods his brethren.
19. He is the god who makes the light from the horizon to the zenith of heaven, opening wide the doors of the sky and establishing light in the world.

20. Father, begetter of the universe, illuminator of living beings.
21. Lord, the ordainer of the laws of heaven and earth, whose command may not be broken.
22. Thou holdest the rain and the lightning, defender of all living things ! there is no god who hath at any time discovered thy fulness.
23. In heaven who is supreme ? Thou alone, thou art supreme.
24. On earth, who is supreme ? Thou alone, thou art supreme.
25. As for thee, thy will is made known in heaven, and the angels bow their faces.
26. As for thee, thy will is made known upon earth, and the spirits below kiss the ground.
27. As for thee, thy will is blown on high like the wind ; the stall and the fold are quickened.
28. As for thee, thy will is done upon the earth, and the herb grows green.
29. As for thee, thy will is seen in the lair and the shepherd's hut : it increases all living things.
30. As for thee, thy will hath created law and justice, so that mankind hath established law.
31. As for thee, thy will is the far-off heaven, the hidden earth, which no man hath known.
32. As for thee, who can learn thy will, who can rival it ?
33. O lord, in heaven is thy lordship, in the earth is thy sovereignty ; among the gods thy brethren a rival thou hast not.
34. King of kings, of whose . . . no man is judge, whose divinity no god resembles.

[The next three lines are too broken for translation.]

38. Look with favour on thy temple.
39. Look with favour on Ur, thy city.
40. Let the high-born dame ask rest of thee, O lord.
41. Let the free-born man ask rest of thee, O lord.

42. 43. Let the spirits of heaven and earth ask rest of thee,  
O lord.<sup>1</sup>

The name of Nannar, to whom this Hymn is addressed, is a matter of small concern. The object of chief interest and importance is the concept of Deity which is embodied in the Hymn itself. And this concept we must admit is of a remarkable character, considering the very early date when the Hymn was composed. As yet no divine or superhuman revelation of the Deity had been given, and yet we find evidence of a religious consciousness, which corresponds in many respects with that displayed in the Sacred Writings of the Hebrews, in regard to Yahveh (Jehovah).

The following brief analysis of the Hymn will serve to bring out this point with greater clearness.

#### ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT OF DEITY EMBODIED IN THE HYMN TO FATHER NANNAR

The following are among the attributes ascribed to him.

##### TRANSCENDENCY

vers. 1-8. Sole and universal supremacy in heaven and earth.

He is the Prince of the gods. Also, 22, 23.

ver. 12. He is the Merciful One. The Creator of the Universe,

ver. 15. and of gods and men.

<sup>1</sup> The above is a copy of the translation of Hymn given by Dr. Sayce in his Hibbert Lectures, 1887.



ver. 15. As to his moral character he is long-suffering and full of forgiveness.

Cp. Exod. xxxiv. 6, "The Lord God is merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth."

#### IMMANENCE

ver. 13. His divinity, like the far-off heaven, fills the wide sea with fear.<sup>1</sup>

vers. 14-15. The instinct of religion, and the institution of divine worship are due to his inspiration. The erection of the shrine with the offering and sacrifice.

ver. 16. Earthly dominion, the royal sceptre and destiny to a distant day are his to decide.

Cp. 1 Chron. xxix. 11, 12, "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness . . . for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine," etc.

ver. 17. His heart is immensity, none may discover it.<sup>2</sup> Also ver. 22.

ver. 19. He is the source and giver of light.<sup>3</sup>

#### THE UNIVERSAL LAW GIVER

ver. 21. The physical laws of nature and the Universe are his appointment, which may not be broken.

Cp. "He hath given them a law which may not be broken."

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Ps. cxxxix. 8-10, "If I ascend into heaven, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me."

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Job xi. 7, "Canst thou by searching find out God?"

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Gen. i. 3, "And God said, Let there be light, and there was light." Also James i. 17, "The Father of lights."



## HIS WILL PROCLAIMS HIM A PERSONAL GOD

vers. 25-32. In these verses the poet celebrates "the Will" of his deity in language which is nothing short of sublime.

"Thy will is made known in heaven, and the angels bow their faces. It is made known upon earth, and the spirits below kiss the ground" in deepest reverence.

Can we fail to read here an anticipation of those expressions of prayer and praise in which the Christian Church is wont to address, not Father Nannar, but Yahveh, "the Father Everlasting"?

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

"To Thee all angels cry aloud.

The heavens and all the powers therein.

To Thee Cherubim and Seraphim continually do cry."

vers. 27-29. "As for thee, thy will is blown on high, like the wind. The stall, and the fold are quickened The herb grows green. It increases all living things."

Cp. Ps. civ. 30, "When Thou lettest Thy breath go forth, they shall be made; and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth."

ver. 30. Thy will is the source and foundation of human law and justice, which is the reflex of the divine.

Cp. Prov. viii. 15. "By me kings reign and princes decree justice."

vers. 33, 34. "Among the gods thy brethren a rival thou hast not. Whose divinity no god resembles."

Cp. Exod. xv. 11, "Who is like unto Thee among the gods?"

Ps. lxxvii. 13, "Who is so great a God as our God?"

## HE IS THE HEARER OF PRAYER

vers. 38, 39. Invocation of the divine favour "on thy temple," and "on Ur thy city."

Cp. Ps. cxxii. 6-9, "O pray for the peace of Jerusalem. . . . Because of the house of Jehovah our God, I will seek Thy good."

vers. 40-42. "Let all address their prayers to thee, and ask for rest."

Cp. Ps. lxxv. 2, "O Thou that hearest the prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come."

### THIRD CLASS OF BABYLONIAN SCRIPTS—THE PENITENTIAL PSALMS AND LITANIES

These form the third class of the sacred writings of the Chaldeans, and a very interesting collection it is from several points of view.

They were written, not like the Magical Texts and the majority of the Hymns, in the Sumerian dialect of the south, but in the Accadian of the north. They belong neither to the same age nor the same city, but they were all distinguished by the same characteristic features, which lend them so striking a resemblance to some of the Psalms of the Old Testament.

Indeed so close is this resemblance, that it seems impossible to doubt that there is a strong affinity between them. Both in sentiment, tone, and expression, one cannot fail to be struck with the similarity.

### THE CONCEPT OF SIN

These Penitential Psalms and Litanies present a marked contrast to the two previous collections of Babylonian writings. And, indeed, it is this

contrast which constitutes for us their chief interest in the present connection. Incantation and magic have disappeared, and given place to a far higher form of religious consciousness. There appears, for the first time, a sense and conviction of sin and moral defection, which in turn reacts on the concept of the Deity Himself. In some of the Hymns He was worshipped as transcendent and supreme; but now He is revered as a holy Being, bound by His nature to punish the wrongdoer.<sup>1</sup>

An example of one of these Penitential Psalms, which I give in abbreviated form, will enable my readers to form a tolerably correct idea of their general character.

“The heart of my lord is wroth; may it be appeased!  
May the god I know, and the god I know not, be appeased!  
May the god who has been violent against me be appeased!  
The sin that I sinned I knew not.  
A name of blessing may my god pronounce upon me.  
Pure food I have not eaten,  
Clear water I have not drunk.  
The cursed thing of my god unknowingly did I eat;  
The cursed thing of my goddess unknowingly did I  
trample on.

<sup>1</sup> “The consciousness of sin,” says Dr. Sayce (p. 352), “is a new feature in Chaldean religion, and belongs to the age that saw the rise of poems like that on the Deluge, which ascribed the sufferings of mankind to their wrong-doing. Hitherto the evil that existed in the world had not been given a moral significance. It was due to the action of malevolent spirits, or the decrees of inexorable fate, rather than to the wickedness of man, and it was removed by spells and ceremonies, which occasioned the interference of the god of Wisdom and his son Merodach.”



O lord, my sins are many, my transgressions are great ;  
 The sin that I sinned I knew not,  
 The transgressions I committed I knew not.  
 The lord in the wrath of his heart has regarded me.  
 God, in the fierceness of his heart, has revealed himself to  
 me.

I sought for help and none took my hand ;  
 I wept, and none stood at my side ;<sup>1</sup>  
 I cried aloud and there was none that heard me.  
 I am in trouble and hiding ; I dare not look up.<sup>2</sup>  
 To my god, the merciful one, I turn myself ; I utter my  
 prayer.

The feet of my goddess I kiss and water with tears.<sup>3</sup>  
 O lord, look upon me ; receive my prayer !  
 How long, O god, shall I suffer ?  
 O lord, destroy not thy servant !  
 When cast into the water of the ocean (?) take his hand.  
 The sins I have sinned turn to a blessing.  
 The transgressions I have committed may the wind carry  
 away.

Strip off my manifold wickednesses as a garment.  
 O my god, seven times seven are my transgressions ;  
 forgive my sins.  
 May thy heart be appeased, as the heart of a mother, who  
 has borne children."

*Colophon.* . . . Like its original, copied and published :  
 Palace of Assur-bani-pal, King of Legions, King of Assyria.<sup>4</sup>

#### OTHER EXAMPLES

##### *Voice of the Penitent :*

" O my mistress, greatly am I yoked to evil.  
 Thou hast surrounded me, and hast appointed me to pain."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Ps. lxi. 21, " I looked for some to have pity on me, but there was no man, neither found I any to comfort me."

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Ps. xl. 15, " My sins have taken such hold upon me that I am not able to look up."

<sup>3</sup> " I water my couch with my tears " (Ps. vi. 6).

<sup>4</sup> Sayce, pp. 349 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Sayce, p. 524.



*Priest :*

"In lamentation is he sealed.

Like doves does he mourn bitterly night and day.<sup>1</sup>

To his merciful god, like a heifer he roars.

Before his god he prostrates his face in prayer,

He weeps, he has drawn near, he holds not back."

*Penitent :*

"Let me declare my doing, my doing which cannot be declared."

## LITANIES

I quote the following extracts as examples of the Litanies to the gods.

"What have I done that I should bear the sin?

To the light I have uttered the spell and yet I bear the sin.

To the Moon-god I have uttered the spell, and yet I bear the sin.

To the Sun-god I have uttered the spell, and yet I bear the sin.

To Rimmon I have uttered the spell, and yet I bear the sin.

To the seven gods and the twin gods I have uttered the spell, and yet I bear the sin,

... I have uttered the spell, may my sin be forgiven."<sup>2</sup>

The following is evidently a lamentation uttered in time of national distress.

"The lamentation he causes to rain like a cloud in the land.

The lamentation seizes the land like a cloud.

Like a house of sickness that is destroyed he sits in tears.

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xxxviii. 14, "I did mourn as a dove."

<sup>2</sup> Sayce, p. 532.

Like a house of sickness that is destroyed ; what has  
 happened to me ?  
 The mighty shepherd's tent is full of sorrow and painful  
 weeping,  
 Its broad plain is desolated (?)  
 His chariot supreme mounts the height (?)  
 His horse supreme submits to the yoke.  
 In this temple the drink-offering (?) is not out-poured, its  
 food is not presented."<sup>1</sup>

## ANOTHER EXAMPLE

" May thy life make my life like a crystal, may it grant  
 mercy.

O my god and my goddess, who judge me, may my land

Be blessed like gold in the mouth of men !

Like a seal may my troubles be sent far away !

Never may the evil and unpropitious approach me, never  
 may it fetter me !

In thy sight may my name and my double be guided aright !

May the medicines and the rites, which are established  
 before thee, put away all that is harmful to my image.

. . . . .

Like the heavens, may I be pure when enchantments befall  
 me !

Like the earth, may I be bright in the evil time of witch-  
 craft !

Like the midst of heaven, may I shine, may I make the  
 multitudes of my evils to fear,

May the green corn purify me ; may the herb of Venus  
 absolve me ; may the tree trunk take away my sin !"<sup>2</sup>

From a theological and religious point of view  
 the Litanies are neither so interesting nor valuable  
 as the Hymns and Penitential Psalms. Indeed,

<sup>1</sup> Sayce, p. 534.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from Litany on p. 538.

their main interest for us lies in the fact that they seem to mark the intermediate stage in the gradual evolution of religious consciousness, between the belief in magic and evil spirits, and the far higher and purer concepts to be found in the Hymns and Penitential Psalms.

Taken as a whole these ancient scripts certainly do bear witness to such an evolution, and the question not unnaturally suggests itself; is it possible to offer any explanation of such a remarkable psychological and spiritual phenomenon?

Nor are there wanting certain considerations which ought to be taken into account, as calculated to throw light on this question.

These ancient writers were the very earliest students of Nature, of Nature, too, in its sublimest and most impressive aspects.

“Star-worship,” says Dr. Sayce, “was imagined to be the most primitive phase of Oriental religion. . . . Dupuis resolved all human forms of faith into zodiacal symbols, and Sir William Drummond went far in the same direction. That the first gods of the heathen were the planets and the stars of heaven was regarded by high authorities as an incontrovertible fact.”—Hibb. Lect. 396.

Babylonia, indeed, may with truth be regarded as the cradle of astronomical science and observation.<sup>1</sup> Long before the lofty “towers” of the

<sup>1</sup> “We know that Sargon’s patronage of science produced the great standard Babylonian work on astronomy and astrology in seventy-two



temples were erected in which the royal astronomers of Sargon of Accad had their stations and from which they sent their reports to the King, the leading constellations had been named, and the sky had been divided into twelve sections, which gave their names to the signs of the zodiac.

Little wonder, then, that their study of Nature should have led the way to inquiries of a religious character. What were these celestial objects which filled them with such awe and admiration? At first, not unnaturally, they were regarded as themselves living and divine, and therefore objects to be worshipped. Hence arose the varied forms of astro-theology in which the sun and moon became divinized and worshipped.

But the process of spiritual evolution was all the time going forward, and gradually this phase of astro-theology and creature worship gave way to purer and more elevated concepts of the Deity such as found their expression, for example, in the magnificent Hymn to Father Nannar, and the Penitential Psalms.

How are we to account for this remarkable development of the religious consciousness?

There is but one way, as it seems to me, and it is that indicated as the normal method of Divine manifestation, through the influence of the Spirit of God immanent in the universe.

books which went under the name of the 'Observations of Bel.'"—Sayce, 293.



For these men, too, even before the Psalmist, gave expression to the thought, "the heavens declared the glory of God, and the firmament showed His handiwork."

They remind us of the men to whom the Apostle Paul referred in his address to the learned Athenians on the true philosophy of history (Acts xvii. 24-29).

"God that made the world and all things therein, . . . hath made of one blood every nation of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth . . . that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us: for in Him we live, and move, and have our being."<sup>1</sup>

These ancient Accadians and Semites were in truth feeling after God, if haply they might find Him. And their search was not in vain, because they were in earnest, and sought Him where He is ever to be found, in Nature;

"Upon the great world's altar-stairs,  
That slope through darkness up to God."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Better, as Bishop Ellicott points out: "*We live and are moved and exist*," ζῶμεν καὶ κινούμεθα καὶ ἔσμεν. Each term has a definite philosophic and psychological meaning. The first refers to our animal life, the second to the psychic life of passion and emotion; the third to the essential principle, the intellect and will of man. Taken as a whole the words imply more than the omnipresence of God. They tell us, that the power for every act, whether of body or soul, whether of sensation or thought, comes from Him, because He is the Giver of life, immanent alike in the soul of man as also in the universe which forms His environment.

<sup>2</sup> Tennyson, "In Memoriam," stanza liv.

Their quest ended not in the hopeless Agnosticism of the "Rubáiyát" of Omar Khayyám, which found its only alleviation in the flowing wine-cup—

"And this was all the harvest that I reaped—  
 'I came like water, and like wind I go.'  
 Into this Universe, and *why*, not knowing,  
 Nor *whence*, like water willy-nilly flowing :  
 And out of it, as wind along the waste,  
 I know not *whither*, willy-nilly blowing.

Another, and another cup to drown  
 The memory of this impertinence,"<sup>1</sup>

but in the joyous confidence which sprang from the consciousness of God, realized in the wonderful works of His Hand.

These star-gazers were in earnest, and their search was rewarded by a true, though partial and imperfect, vision of God. But was no clearer, fuller vision to be granted to those who in after times should continue the search? Having reached this stage of development, was the religious consciousness of mankind to be suddenly and hopelessly arrested? To think so would be to run counter to the law of human progress and psychic evolution.

Having become conscious of God, and been brought into spiritual relation with Him, was nothing more to come of it all? Was no closer communion of the soul with its Parent-spirit possible? Would not such a thought have been

<sup>1</sup> "The Rubáiyát," stanzas xxviii., xxix.

repugnant even to Cleanthes, who lived and wrote his Hymn to Zeus 300 years before the Christian Era? <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Almighty and for ever, thee, O Zeus,  
Sóvran o'er Nature, guiding with thy hand  
All things that are, we greet with praises;  
Thee 'tis meet that mortals call with one accord,  
For we thine offspring are."

See also Acts xvii. 28.

## CHAPTER VI

### PLOTINUS AND HIS PHILOSOPHY

The same as compared with Christian Theology and Philosophy.

"The founder of the Neoplatonic School in Alexandria is supposed to have been Ammonius Saccas (c. A.D. 245), who is said to have been a Christian by birth, and to have relapsed to heathenism. As he has left no written works behind him, it is impossible to criticize his teaching. He communicated to his pupils an admiration for Plato, and set them to work at the reconciliation of Plato and Aristotle. The most distinguished of his disciples were Origen the Christian, another Origen—a heathen, Longinus Herennius, and, the greatest of all, Plotinus."<sup>1</sup>

SOME quotations from Dean Inge's book, "The Philosophy of Plotinus," Gifford Lectures, 1917-18 :—

" . . . the philosophy of Plotinus has a permanent value far greater than is usually supposed."

"Personality is, above all things, a quality which expresses the moral nature of man."

"Teleology needs no proof. Every process has a meaning, and the whole is stultified by final failure."

"Physical Science is well aware of the fate in store for this planet. The achievements of humanity will one day be wiped off the slate. Man must find consolation for the inevitable fate of his species, either nowhere, or in a heaven, where all values are preserved eternally."

<sup>1</sup> Prof. A. Harnack, in "Encyc. Brit."



Extract from Canon F. W. Barnes' review in the *Church Family Newspaper*, Jan. 21, 1919.

"Augustine found in Plotinus nothing less than Plato come to life again. Through Augustine, and others, Hellenic Philosophy entered the Christian Church. . . . The debt of Christian Theology to Neoplatonism is too often ignored."

### THE EARLY HISTORY OF PLOTINUS

Plotinus commenced the study of philosophy as a pupil of Ammonius Saccas, a Platonic lecturer in Alexandria, about the middle of the third century A.D., and remained with him eleven years. At the age of forty he settled in Rome, where he became a lecturer of the Neoplatonic school. And here, when he was fifty years old, his work as an author began. His sole literary work is the philosophical work which goes by the name of the "Enneads," and which are so called because the six component parts are each one subdivided into nine lesser parts or sections.

His early acquaintance with, and admiration for, Eastern or Indian philosophy left its mark on his after life and study, even when he became the advocate, and, as we might say, the protagonist of Neoplatonism; for his system is really a compound of mysticism and idealism.

The method used by Plotinus for giving expression to his philosophical speculations was the adoption of three hypostates or principles, which he regarded as constituting the sum total of all

supra-sensuous existence. And as a kind of link uniting them all together, he claimed as an axiom that every being tends necessarily to produce an image of itself. Thus, the second hypostasis, or Divine Principle, is said to be the product or manifestation of the first; and the third of the first and second respectively.

AN EXAMINATION OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL SYSTEM  
OF PLOTINUS, AND SPECIALLY WITH A VIEW TO  
ASCERTAIN THE POINTS IN WHICH IT RESEMBLES,  
OR DIFFERS FROM THE SPIRITUAL SYSTEM OF  
CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY

I think it may truly be said, that no system of philosophical speculation, outside Christianity, has exercised a deeper and more lasting influence on the minds of thinking men than that which claimed Plotinus for its author.

PLOTINUS, HIS LIFE AND WORK <sup>1</sup>

Neither the space nor time at my command permits me to consider in detail the contents of the *Enneads*. Such is not my intention, nor indeed is it necessary, seeing that careful studies of the works of Plotinus have from time to time appeared. And only quite recently, I see, Dean

<sup>1</sup> For the following digest I gratefully acknowledge my obligation to a metaphysical study of "The Wisdom of Plotinus," by Mr. C. T. Whitby, M.A., M.D., Cantab.

Inge has published a very elaborate and, we may say, voluminous work on the subject. My object on the present occasion is of a far more restricted and less ambitious character. It is only to present my reader with a general outline of the Plotinean System of Philosophy, and so enable him to compare, or contrast it with that Spiritual Philosophy, which I claim to be the basis of Christian theology and religion.

It is, I think, pretty well known that Plotinus based his philosophy on the recognition of three fundamental principles, to which he gave the name of Hypostases.

For myself, I would like to say, before proceeding further to discuss briefly the Plotinean System, that the more I have studied it the more I have been impressed with the sublimity of its conceptions, and their resemblance in some respects to the Theology and Spiritual Philosophy of the Christian System. But, while I say this, I am bound to add, that in some other respects I am equally impressed with a sense of their vast inferiority.

#### THE FIRST HYPOSTASIS

is regarded as the prime and sole Source of a Being whatsoever, and is designated as the One, or the Good. It is compared to a stream which is its own source,<sup>1</sup> whose derivative waves flow

<sup>1</sup> Ennead III., Book viii. 9.



centrifugally in all directions, but which continues to subsist, nevertheless, immutably in and for itself. It transcends all known attributes, and even the idea of existence.

It is, as I have already remarked, an axiom with Plotinus, that every being tends to produce an image of itself.<sup>1</sup> Thus the 2nd and 3rd Hypostases are regarded as the manifestation of the 1st and 2nd respectively. The 1st Hypostasis, though it transcends all conception and definition, is still to be regarded as the source and origin of *Universal and Divine Existence*.

#### THE SECOND HYPOSTASIS,

which is the image of the first, occupies the sphere of absolute reality, and Universal Intelligence.

The forms of this Divine Universe are regarded as a manifestation of the creative power of the One, or the Good, and the perfect harmony of their infinite variety is the proof of its Presence among them.<sup>2</sup>

#### THE THIRD HYPOSTASIS.

As the 1st Hypostasis is said to produce as its image the Universal Intelligence, so this in turn produces as its image the Universal Soul.

<sup>1</sup> Ennead IV., Book v. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Ennead III., Book viii., Sect. 10.



Thus it appears that the three Hypostases stand for three principles, and these together constitute the whole Universe taken in its widest and most comprehensive sense. They are—

1st. *The One*, the Symbol of Unity.

2nd. *The Universal Intelligence*, or *Reason*, which pervades all Creation.

3rd. *The Universal Soul*, or *Spirit*, of the Universe.

It must not be supposed, however, that the 2nd and 3rd Hypostases, the *Universal Intelligence* and the *Universal Spirit*, though drawing their origin from the 1st Hypostasis, *The One*, or *The Good*, are ever severed from it, on the contrary, they are only manifestations, or forms, of the Divine Unity, which taken together may be said to complete or perfect it.

Such is a brief and imperfect outline of the main characteristics of the Plotinian Philosophy. Brief and imperfect as it is, it is hardly possible not to see in it certain points, or traits, of resemblance to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, as formulated in the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds.

As in the system of Plotinus the 2nd and 3rd Hypostases derive their origin from the 1st, and are never severed from it, but are only different Forms and Manifestations of the Divine Energy of *The One*; so in the Christian System of Theology and Philosophy, the Second Person of the Trinity, designated indifferently as the Word,

or Son begotten of the Father alone, and the Third Person, the Holy Ghost or immanent Spirit, are partakers of the Divine Nature, or Godhead, are never separated from it, but complete "the Unity in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, which is to be worshipped," and forms the fundamental expression of the Catholic Faith.<sup>1</sup>

But the point, in which, as it seems to me, the system of Plotinus is most defective and unsatisfying is its treatment of the important subject of Personality. It is also the point in which it differs most widely from the Christian System of Theology and Philosophy.

Of the 1st Hypostasis—*The One*—we are allowed to predicate nothing. And, therefore, whatever it may be, we may not assume that it is a person, or a personal entity.

The 2nd Hypostasis, again, being pure and Universal Intelligence or reason, is also impersonal.

And the 3rd Hypostasis, being a universal Spiritual Essence proceeding from two impersonal antecedents, the 1st and 2nd Hypostases, must itself be impersonal.

Now, that the soul of man is a personal spirit,

<sup>1</sup> "In the beginning was the Word. And the Word (*λόγος*) was with God, and the Word was God."—St. John i. 1.

Cp. "Neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance."

"The Godhead of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost is all One; the glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal."—Athanasian Creed.

and possessed of all the attributes or qualities which constitutes personality, will not, I imagine, be denied. But a personal soul in man the creature, demands a Personal Spirit in God the Creator as its source and correspondent. And no system of Philosophy, which does not recognize, and make provision for, this demand can be considered adequate to meet the religious and psychological instincts and aspirations of mankind.

This failure of the Plotinian System of Philosophy to meet this demand for the personal element in the nature and being of God constitutes, to my mind, not only its cardinal defect, but also its point of most serious and striking inferiority to the Christian Philosophy.

Indeed, the subject is of such great and far-reaching importance that I ask my reader's patience for examining it more carefully.

Professor Green of Oxford was one of the most distinguished of the Hegelians or Neo-Kantians, as we may call them. His whole system centres in the assertion of a Self or Spiritual Principle as necessary alike for the existence of knowledge and morality. "All knowledge or experience," he argues, "presupposes a Self" who knows and experiences. This Self Kant calls the highest principle of all exercise of the understanding. You cannot have thought without a thinker, nor a thinker without thought.

"But thought implies the objective existence



of the thing thought about—that is, the subject of thought. Hence the thinker, and the object thought about, postulate each other, and are necessarily correlated. In short, the ultimate fact of knowledge is neither mere subject, nor pure object; neither a pure sensation nor a mere *Ego*, but an *Ego*, or subject, *conscious* of sensations. It is not a mere Unity, but a Unity in Duality.” Green, then, explicitly identifies the Self, which the theory of knowledge reveals—the single active self-conscious principle, by whatever name it may be called—with the universal or divine Self-consciousness.

There is one intelligible world, all the elements of which are mutually complementary and necessary (p. 20). The Self and the world are only two sides of the same reality.

There is but one Absolute that is strictly necessary, and that Existence is a supreme and infinite and everlasting Mind in synthesis with all things (34).

The cardinal defect and danger of the Plotinian System, as it seems to me, is that in none of the Hypostases do we find room, or the conditions necessary for a belief in a personal God. The Divine Idea is made up of impersonal principles of which personality is never predicated, but only a Universal Reason and a Universal Spirit.

And furthermore, if as the result of the operation of these principles, *the One* attains to



Personality it is not the Personality inherent in a Self-conscious Being, but only the sum total of the consciousness possessed by the creatures called into being.

#### POINTS OF RESEMBLANCE AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PLOTINEAN AND CHRISTIAN SYSTEMS OF PHILOSOPHY

The doctrine of Divinity, which Plotinus sought to erect upon or extract from his three Hypostases, of (1) the One or the Good, (2) the Intelligence, and (3) the Spirit, or Soul, of the Universe, resembles the Christian doctrine of the Trinity in some respects, but differs widely in others. Thus, for example, the *One*, which is claimed to be the fount and origin of all intelligence, and spiritual activity, resembles the God-head of the Christian Trinity.

The 2nd Hypostasis of the Universal Intelligence resembles the Second Person of the Trinity, the Creative Word of St. John, the eternal Son, begotten of the Father alone, and the expression or manifestation of the Father's love in Creation, Incarnation, and Redemption.

The system of Plotinus is Neoplatonic. It is mystic and metaphysical. But the lack of the personal element deprives it to a very large extent of its religious character, and renders it unfit to satisfy the religious instincts and aspirations of

the personal soul or spirit of man. It is a system in which the philosopher may mount on the wings of contemplation and attain an ecstasy truly sublime, but it will fail to minister to the spiritual needs and yearnings of ordinary mortals, and bring them nearer to God.

### PLOTINUS AND THE INCARNATION

Another, and most important mark of distinction between the Plotinean and Christian Systems is that of the doctrine of Incarnation, which finds no place in the former, but occupies a position of essential and cardinal importance in the latter.

Remove that doctrine from the body of Christian Faith and Philosophy, and they cease to be Christian. For neither is that doctrine an incongruous insertion nor an after-thought, but a fact whose realization had been long foretold and anticipated.

Of that doctrine it is specially true, that the New Testament is nascent and latent in the Old, and the Old is patent and distinct in the New.

The contrast between the two systems in respect to the doctrine of the Incarnation is not only very marked, but also of the utmost significance. For while in the first Hypostasis of the *One* we have a Divinity whose very existence we are forbidden to affirm, and which can only be known and manifested by impersonal principles,

with which the personal spirit of man can never be brought into touch and vital relationship; in the Christian System the Deity is a personal Being, who, through the Incarnation—the Word made Flesh—is revealed to every man, as, “Our Father, which art in heaven,” and between whom and ourselves a relationship of the most endearing nature may quite possibly exist.

“Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us,” was the request of Philip. And the Incarnation was the answer to the request.

“Have I been so long with you, and hast thou not known me, Philip? I and the Father are One. He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.”

The Incarnation becomes the medium through which the personal relation between the kindred spirits of God and man is disclosed in a manner so simple and intelligible that the wayfaring man, though a fool, can understand it. For God becomes his Father and his Friend; and all that is implied in that relationship of paternal love and protection on the one hand, and of filial affection and duty on the other, even nature teaches him to comprehend.

Perhaps Plotinus never uttered words more pregnant with meaning and instruction than when, on his dying bed, he bade a disciple to bring the God that is in him into closer union with the God that is in *the All*.



## CHAPTER VII

### COSMISM AND COSMIC PHILOSOPHY

John Fiske—Denial of the Personality of God.

COSMISM is the concept of the Cosmos, or Order of Nature, as a self-existent, self-acting whole. It is the Theory which explains the Universe solely according to the methods of positive science and materialism.

Holyoake, in his "Limits of Atheism," writes thus :—" To believe in Nature in its self-existence, self-subsistence, self-action, its eternity, infinity, materiality, and in that only, is affirmative Atheism." Gresley calls Cosmism "the new notion of Affirmative Atheism."<sup>1</sup>

The late John Fiske, of Harvard University, in his great work on Cosmic Philosophy, thus sums up his definition of Philosophy :—

" Philosophy, therefore, remains, as of old, the study of the Cosmos—save that it is the study of phenomena not of noumena, of evolution not of creation, of laws not of purposes, of the How? not of the Why?"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The English Dictionary," art. "Cosmism."

<sup>2</sup> "Cosmic Philosophy," vol. i. p. 44.



After such a partial and one-sided view of the function and scope of Philosophy, we can hardly wonder that Fiske should have refused to recognize a voluntary agency behind the Power, which, *perforce*, he was bound to acknowledge in Nature and the Universe. From this position the further step to the denial of the Personality of God was easy and perhaps inevitable.

Certainly such a definition of Philosophy as was enunciated by Fiske would scarcely be considered adequate to-day. And had he lived to read the "Creative Evolution" of M. Bergson, we cannot help wondering how the two philosophers would have reconciled their differences.

But the Cosmic Philosophy as expounded by Fiske is far too important a subject, and differs too widely from the Spiritual Philosophy I am out to defend, to be thus summarily dismissed. I shall therefore invite my reader to consider with me some of these points of differences.

#### POINTS OF DIFFERENCE

In the first place I wish to say, that I regard Mr. Fiske's "Cosmic Philosophy" as a work of great ability and research, but at the same time as one fraught with great danger to theistic belief and the religious expression of it.

It is a matter of much regret to me that, in taking up a position of antagonism to the late

Professor and some of his philosophical speculations and conclusions, I may seem to be fighting with an antagonist who is now unable to answer for himself in reply to the criticisms and arguments I shall endeavour to bring forward. But I am sure my readers will agree with me that the love of truth must rise superior to all considerations of a personal nature. And in order to reduce the objection arising on this score to its smallest dimensions, I shall, as far as possible, let Mr. Fiske speak for himself, either by the quotation of passages from his Book or by giving the references to them.

The following extract (vol. i. p. 181) will serve, perhaps better than any other, to give us an idea of the general drift of Mr. Fiske's "Cosmic Philosophy." I commend it to the careful consideration of my readers.

After tracing the growth of the religious sentiment from primæval fetishism through polytheism to monotheism, he points out that, while the earlier stages of the process were marked by the belief in a number of volitional agencies, the final phase is characterized by the complete extrusion of these agencies and the universal substitution of the conception of invariable sequence.

"Volitional agencies were not at once extruded, but were only generalized more and more, and gradually separated further and further from the phenomena they were supposed to produce. A

great step was taken in philosophy when the Titan dynasty was dethroned, and the celestial and terrestrial provinces of phenomena partitioned between Zeus and Poseidon. A still greater step was taken when God, considered as an arbitrary volitional agency, was entirely separated from the universe of tolerably uniform sequences, interposing with His will only on rare occasions. . . . Finally when physical generalization has advanced so far as to include all, or nearly all orders of phenomena, the theory of miraculous interposition vanishes or remains only as a lifeless formula, verbally assented to, but not really believed in, while the presiding volition is thrust back to the beginning of things, being retained only as a convenient and apparently necessary postulate by which to account for the origin of the Universe, and the harmonious co-operation of phenomena. We have now only to note that further progress in deanthropomorphization involves *the extrusion of the notion of a Volitional Cause altogether* and leaves us with the conception of a Cause manifested throughout the entire world of phenomena, which is an indestructible element of consciousness and which, equally with the anthropomorphic conceptions <sup>1</sup> which have preceded it, is the proper object of religious feeling, but concerning the nature of which—in itself and

<sup>1</sup> By this terrible word, *deanthropomorphization*, Mr. Fiske wished to denote "the stripping off of the anthropomorphic attributes with which primæval philosophy clothed the Unknown Power which is manifested in phenomena" (vol. i. p. 176).



apart from its phenomenal manifestations—the human mind can frame no verifiable hypothesis.”

Again (vol. ii. p. 413 ff.) we read :

“ Underlying this aggregate of phenomena, to whose extension we know no limit in space or time, we have found ourselves compelled to postulate an Absolute Reality—a Something whose existence does not depend on the presence of a percipient Mind, which existed before the genesis of intelligence, and would continue to exist, though all intelligence were to vanish from the scene.”

What Mr. Fiske's conception was of this *Absolute Reality*, this final and irreducible minimum of essential being, this *Causa causarum* of all things, he tells us in the following formula, p. 415 : “ There exists a POWER, to which no limit in time or space is conceivable, of which all phenomena as presented in consciousness are manifestations, but which we can know only through these manifestations.”

Here is a formula legitimately obtained by the employment of scientific methods as the last result of a subjective analysis on the one hand, and of an objective analysis on the other hand, yet this formula, which presents itself as the final outcome of a purely scientific inquiry, expresses also the fundamental truth of Theism—the truth by which religious feeling is justified. The existence of God—the supreme truth asserted alike by Christianity



and by inferior historic religions—is asserted with equal emphasis by that Cosmic Philosophy which seeks its data in science alone. . . . The cosmist may assert as consistently as the anthropomorphist that “the undevout astronomer is mad.” Though science must destroy mythology, it can never destroy religion; and to the astronomer of the future, as well as to the Psalmist of old, the heavens will declare the glory of God. In this theorem science and religion find their reconciliation.

On p. 174, vol. i., Mr. Fiske quotes Herbert Spencer (“Recent Dissertations,” p. 124), as follows :—

“When the theological idea of the providential action of one Being is developed to its ultimate form by the absorption of all independent secondary agencies, it becomes the conception of a *Being immanent* in all phenomena.”

Mr. Fiske calls this a “completely unanswerable statement.” And therefore we may assume that *the Power* whose existence he postulated as the *Absolute Something* and the *transcendent Cause* of all things, was admitted by Mr. Fiske to be *immanent* also in all things.

These extracts, which might be indefinitely multiplied, will help my readers to form some general idea of the line of argument followed by Mr. Fiske in his Cosmic Philosophy. There is much in them with which we find ourselves in

entire agreement. But the great outstanding question remains—

What is the nature of this *Power* which is postulated?

It is at this point I feel compelled to part company with Mr. Fiske. He carried his desire for deanthropomorphization to such an extreme that not even Personality is left as an attribute of the Deity. His *Absolute Something* is an impersonal Power or Entity of which it is impossible to form any verifiable hypothesis or conception. And his reason for making this astonishing statement is that infinity and personality are incompatible terms.<sup>1</sup> An infinite Power cannot be a personal Power. In enunciating this metaphysical doctrine Mr. Fiske stands in marked opposition to Aristotle, who taught that personality must be held to be an inalienable attribute of Deity.

The consequences and logical inferences of this denial of the personality of God are of the most serious and far-reaching character, and can only be indicated in the briefest manner here. Together with personality, volitional agency also disappears. For, am I wrong in supposing that apart from personality free-will cannot exist?

<sup>1</sup> As, for example, in the following passage: "Though we sacrifice the symbol of Personality, because Personality implies limitation, and to speak of an infinite personality is to cheat oneself with a phrase that is empty of meaning, yet our recognition of Deity is only the more emphatic."—Vol. ii. p. 421.

THE COSMIC PHILOSOPHY IN ITS RELATION TO  
RELIGION

Mr. Fiske evidently did not think his theory of Deity, as an impersonal Power or Force, incompatible with religious feeling and instinct. The subject is one of unspeakable importance and will come in for more careful discussion later on. At this point I will only ask my reader to consider whether Mr. Fiske's doctrine would not deal a fatal blow to religious worship and belief? Can men worship "an impersonal Something, of which it is impossible for them to form any possible conception"? This is a point in the Cosmic Philosophy and Cosmism in general, to which I would call my readers' special attention.

Mr. Fiske tells us that the further progress of deanthropomorphization to which he attached so much importance "involves the extrusion of the notion of a Volitional Cause altogether from the idea of God and leaves us with the conception of a Cause, manifested throughout the entire world of phenomena . . . and which is the proper object of religious feeling."<sup>1</sup> "There exists a Power of which all phenomena are manifestations, but which we can know only through those manifestations" (vol. ii. p. 415).

In other words the Deity is manifested through phenomena.

<sup>1</sup> Vol. i. p. 181, and vol. ii. p. 415.



In this statement Mr. Fiske made a great admission, the full significance of which, as it seems to me, he failed to realize.

If the Deity is immanent in Nature and manifested through the phenomena of Nature, what do they manifest? If they reveal nothing, then, to say that the infinite uncreated Cause is manifested by them is nothing more than an idle dictum, void of meaning.

If they do reveal something, then Mr. Fiske was not justified in asserting that of his *Absolute Something* nothing can be known; that it lies for ever, and must for ever remain, beyond the pale of human knowledge and conception.

This very subject of the essential nature of the great Creative Cause had nearly 2,000 years ago engaged the attention of the great Christian philosopher Paul of Tarsus. What does he say? He tells us that *phenomena* have their counterpart in *noumena*, and through *noumena* we perceive the invisible things of God, even His *eternal power* and *Godhead*. These are his words: "For the invisible (*i.e.* the *spiritual*) things of God since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made (*phenomena*), even His everlasting power and Divinity." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The following is the original text:

"τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασι νοούμενα καθορᾶται, ἥτε ἀίδιος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θεϊότης."—Rom. i. 20.



Which of the two is right, St. Paul or Prof. Fiske? For my part, I prefer to take the former as my philosophic guide.

“The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handiwork.”

“Great and marvellous are Thy works, O God, and that my soul knoweth right well.

“How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!”<sup>1</sup>

Yes! The phenomena of Nature and the Universe do manifest and reveal God to man, not as “an Abstract Something, of which we can form no conception,” but as an intelligent, Personal Spirit, infinite wisdom, power, and love.

But it is not until we come to man himself that the full significance of the statement dawns upon us.

For man is the greatest of all phenomena, He is the masterpiece of the Great Poet; the *chef d'œuvre*, the very apex and coping-stone of Creative Evolution so far as our terrestrial experience goes.

Mr. Fiske was evidently desirous to save Theism, and even the Christian presentation of it, while denying the Personality and Free-will of God. He would persuade us that there is nothing in his theory and speculations adverse to religious belief and worship. Can we say he has succeeded?

With the denial of a Personal God Christianity, with all it stands for, becomes an exploded fallacy.

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xix. 1; cxxxix. 14-17.

Worship and prayer must cease to form part of religion; for there is no God to hear or answer: no foothold for faith or hope beyond the present life. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Remove a Volitional Agency from the government of the Universe, and what is there left to fall back upon, save a godless *Materialism*, *Necessity*, or *Comtism*, which is the worship of humanity?

## CHAPTER VIII

### PERSONALITY

(a) In man, (b) In God—Liminal and sub-liminal theory of Consciousness—The Super-Personality of God.

IN the system of Spiritual Philosophy, the doctrine of Personality is the logical corollary of the doctrine of Consciousness. For what is Personality but the organ and ultimate expression of Consciousness?

We have seen how, under the process of evolution, Life, the *Élan Vital*, as Bergson calls it, has gradually been assuming and manifesting itself in higher forms of consciousness. This upward movement has been characterized by and in a sense carried forward through the instrumentality of three agencies—

- (1) Sense perception.
- (2) Mental and intellectual apperception.
- (3) Psychical and spiritual conception.

But every stage in the upward progress of life has been attended by a corresponding increase in the content and character of consciousness. And Personality, as it seems to me, is only the name



we give to the presiding genius or soul which thinks and speaks and acts as the mouthpiece and representative of the entire conscious organism. Thus Personality is an entity of a unitary and spiritual order, because it combines and sums up all the activities implied in consciousness.

Let me offer an illustration. The Franco-Prussian War of 1871 was won by the Commander-in-Chief General von Moltke, not by his presence on the field of battle, but while sitting calm and composed in the central War Office in Berlin, surrounded by his maps and plans of campaign, and in telegraphic communication with his officers in the remotest section of the battle front. And such is the Personality of man. It is the General in supreme command, Who sits in the central bureau of the soul, and directs and controls the varied activities of the self-conscious spirit.

And it is this view of personality, as the organ and normal expression of consciousness in every vital organism, and in every ascending step of the evolutionary process, which, as it seems to me, supplies the very desideratum of a truly logical and scientific theory of Life, to which Dr. McDougall refers in his splendid work on "Body and Mind."

Our Personality is the one fact about our metaphysical nature of which we can never entertain a doubt. But it is more than this. It is the starting-point from which the adventurous spirit



of man sets out in its quest of further knowledge respecting himself and his environment.

The following extracts will make this contention clear.

“As regards the evolutionary problem, I would say that, if heredity is conditioned, not mechanically by the mere structure of the germ-plasm, but by the teleological principle, it follows that the factors which have produced the evolution of species must have operated on and through this principle. Is it possible that the phrase ‘the soul of a race’ is something more than a metaphor? That all that wonderful stability in complexity combined with gradual change through the ages, which Weismann attributes to the hypothetical germ-plasm, is in reality the attribute of an enduring psychic Existent, of which the lives of individual organisms are but successive manifestations?”<sup>1</sup>

And in a note he adds, “I venture to think that the most urgent problem confronting the philosophic biologist is the construction of a theory of life which will harmonize the facts of individuality with the continuity of all life, with the theory of progressive evolution, and with the facts of heredity and bi-parental reproduction. By conceiving the animating principle of each organism as but relatively individual, as a bud from the tree of life, all of whose parts draw their

<sup>1</sup> McDougall, “Body and Mind,” p. 377.

energies from a common stem and root, it seems possible dimly to foreshadow a synthesis of the animism of James and Bergson with the hypothesis in these concluding paragraphs."

To translate all this into the language of the Spiritual Philosophy does not seem a difficult task.

Dr. McDougall not only tells us that the philosophic biologist is confronted by the urgent necessity for "a Theory of Life," he offers beside certain hints, or conjectures of his own, as to what this "Theory of Life" must be.

(1) The principle which underlies the factors is not mechanical but teleological.

(2) The wonderful stability in complexity combined with gradual change through the ages bears witness to an enduring Existent, of which all vital organisms are but successive and ascending manifestations.

(3) He thinks it not improbable that both heredity and experience may be important factors in moulding and developing the psychic constitution of mankind; that as the continuity of a species, stock, or family is maintained from generation to generation with respect to it, so the experience of each generation modifies in some degree, and with cumulative effect, the psychic constitution of its successors.

It is hardly too much to say that all these postulates are granted, and all these desiderata supplied by the Spiritual Philosophy.

1. For, in the first place, it holds that Creation by Evolution is not solely mechanical and material but teleological, rational and spiritual.<sup>1</sup>

2. Such an evolution demands an adequate and congruous Cause, which must be at once Transcendent above all things, and Immanent in all things. As such, this Divine Being must be the Author and Giver of life to all creation.

Consciousness is the synthesis of life, the link which binds together all forms and expressions of life, from that of the life-giving Source and Centre to that of the midge which floats for an hour in the sunbeam, up to the self-conscious spirit or soul of man. In short, all life, whether vegetable or animal, whether human or Divine, is characterized by Consciousness in a greater or less degree. Thus every vital and psychic organism may in truth be regarded "as but relatively individual, as a bud from the tree of life, all of whose parts draw their energies from a common stem and root."

#### THE THEORY OF PERSONALITY ACCORDING TO THE SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHY

We start from Consciousness, which is Life, and Personality, which is the term we use to denote the sum total and ultimate expression of the conscious-

<sup>1</sup> The following admission by such a philosopher as M. Henri Bergson is very significant. "We must learn," he says, "to see the life of the body just where it really is on the road to the life of the spirit."—"Creative Evolution," p. 234.



ness of each vital organism. It is also the executant of the will of that organism.

According to this view, every vital organism possesses a personality of lower or higher degree. And every personality is a unitary Entity which presides over the actions of the organism of which it is the expression.

This summation, or combination of the various threads of conscious perception to form the personal Unit, is one of the most important problems connected with biology and vital development. Many various and divergent hypotheses have been brought forward to solve it by Lotze, Fechner, and others which neither time nor space permit me to discuss.

I will only state here, as briefly as possible, the conclusion at which Dr. McDougall has arrived in his valuable Treatise on "Body and Mind." All attempts to prove that the Unitary Consciousness finds its counterpart and correlative in the nervous structure of the brain, *i.e.* in a *sensorium commune*, have failed. No such *sensorium commune*, or receiving station, to which the several streams of consciousness are transmitted, there to be collected and gathered up into a Unitary Consciousness or Personality, exists. Nevertheless, it is evident that sense-stimuli transmitted to the brain by the nervous processes do produce a change in the Consciousness, which is their combined effect or resultant. But this combination or composition does not take place in the nervous system, and since this Unitary Consciousness is not a material thing it must be an immaterial and spiritual being. "The facts of the relation of sensory consciousness to cerebral events thus renders the conception of a unitary psychic being, call it soul or what you will, a necessary hypothesis" (p. 298).

As the Consciousness develops and attains higher psychical and spiritual values under the process of evolution, so does the Personality.

In all vital organisms below that of man the personality is only of the psychic order, and does not rise to the higher self-conscious, reflective and spiritual level. But when we come to man,



Consciousness, we find, took a mighty leap forward and upward. It became reflective, the object of its own consciousness, and at the same time the personality attained a higher spiritual value. At this point in the process of psychical evolution the "soul," as that which differentiates man from the rest of the animal world, comes into being.

If it should be objected that this theory of the genesis of the human soul and personality of man runs counter to the Scriptural view, which attributes the birth of the soul to a specific and unique act of the Creator—"God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul"—I would remind the objector that the fundamental doctrine of the Spiritual Philosophy is (1) that evolution is the method actually employed in the creation and development of life, as is proved both by science and experience, and (2) that the whole system and process of evolution is held to be due to the immanent Spirit of God, the Lord and Giver of life, as its one and only efficient Cause. If then the soul should be proved to be the product and outcome of evolution, it will not on that account be less the work and offspring of God, than if it sprang into existence by one creative act.

Conscious perception of environment, and response to it, must in every case be accompanied by discrimination between what is advantageous to the organism or the reverse; as also

by the power of choice and volition. All these taken together constitute the Unitary Consciousness in each case. In all vital organisms below that of man, we do not give this Unitary Consciousness the name of soul, or Personality; but when we come to man, with his vast accessions of consciousness, intellectual, moral, and spiritual, we do give it that name.

It is *then* that the soul is launched on its adventurous career of joy or sorrow, of good or evil, of life or death; a career, which by upward steps will bring it nearer to God, the Source of its life, and into closer and closer union and communion with Him; or, which by downward steps will remove it further away, till it ends in darkness and death.

#### THE LIMINAL OR THRESHOLD THEORY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

While on the subject of Life and Consciousness, I must not omit a reference, however brief, to that mysterious but most interesting department of it which goes by the name of the *liminal* or *threshold* theory.

Stated briefly it is as follows: That, beside the threshold or liminal consciousness, which really means the normal waking consciousness, there is a consciousness which lies both below and above it. The former is called the

sub-conscious (sub-liminal) the latter the supra-conscious state and condition. Or, to express it differently, that the faculty of consciousness is not limited to ordinary normal consciousness, but is capable of activity in the region which lies both below and above the normal range of the mind's activity. For example, none will deny that while a man is asleep and his normal consciousness is in abeyance and inactive, his psyché, or soul, may be in a state of great activity and doing all manner of things. I remember once having a dream, that I was condemned to death, and about to be beheaded. I thought to myself, "I am now about to enter the unseen world, and the problem of a future life will be solved. Let me take careful note of all that happens to me."<sup>1</sup>

### FORMS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

We find then the three following forms of Consciousness :

1. *Supra-normal*, or ecstatic.
2. *Normal*, waking Consciousness, called also the Liminal or Threshold form.
3. The Sub-normal, or Sub-liminal, or Sub-conscious form.

That there is empirical evidence to prove that mental activity is not limited to the state of normal waking consciousness, but is continued

<sup>1</sup> To this state of abnormal mental activity Mr. Myers gave the name of Sub-liminal Consciousness.



even when the ordinary sense faculties and corresponding nerve stimuli are in abeyance, cannot be denied. And the question is, not whether these extraordinary manifestations of mental activity do take place, but on what theory or hypothesis of consciousness they are best explained?

Will the Spiritual Philosophy help us in this quest? I think it may. It seems to me that the doctrine of Personality I have endeavoured to outline in this chapter will afford us at least a clue to the mystery.

#### WHAT WAS THAT DOCTRINE?

First, that all Mind is one and universal.

Second, that all individual or personal minds are emanations from the Universal Mind, and are mutually related to the Universal Parent Mind of God, and to the several created or emanent minds, whether of angels or men.

Such in brief is the theory which the Spiritual Philosophy would suggest, and which, if accepted, would, I think, lessen, if it did not altogether remove, the mystery and difficulty which now surround the whole object of the sub-conscious and super-conscious states of mental activity. And I am the more disposed in favour of this hypothesis, because it has already received the support of such men as the late Professor W.

James and Dr. McDougall. And, indeed, to the former I gladly acknowledge my indebtedness for his hypothesis, which adapts itself so readily to that of the Spiritual Philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

Doubtless, many of the phenomena and manifestations claimed and described by Prof. Barrett in his book on *Psychical Research* are so well attested that it would be folly to deny their truth and reality.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In discussing this subject of abnormal consciousness, Dr. McDougall writes as follows :

"More than one attempt has been made to devise an hypothesis which will bring all these super-normal effects under one explanation. Of such attempts the most interesting, perhaps, is that of William James. He suggested that we may regard all minds as connected in some immediate fashion which permits of their reciprocal influence, and of the conjunction of their powers; or, to put the notion in another way, that all mind, human and infra-human, as well as super-human mind, is one, and that our individual minds are but partial manifestations of the One Mind, conditioned by the peculiarities of our bodily organisms."

"All the super-normal effects of mental action, including the extreme instances of control of bodily processes, the expression of knowledge not acquired by any normal means, the supreme achievements of genius, religious conversion, and the ecstatic sense of absorption of the self in a larger all-comprehensive whole, which seems to be the extreme form of the specifically religious experience—all these effects might then be attributed to a partial or temporary suspension of the conditions which commonly isolate the individual mind"—*Psychology*, by Dr. W. McDougall, p. 227.

<sup>2</sup> For my part, I would rather regard the whole subject of abnormal mental activity with an open mind, as one which deserves and demands careful, patient, and unbiased investigation. I agree with the view expressed in a letter which appeared in *The Guardian* of Oct. 18, 1917, above the signatures of certain Fellows and Tutors of Oxford and Cambridge, and others.

"We think not only that the evidence deserves close and scientific study, but that experiment by qualified persons, acting from a strictly scientific and intellectual point of view, is allowable, and even desirable when it is carried out with proper precautions."

But this I firmly believe, that so far as these abnormal or extra-normal manifestations may prove veridical and trustworthy, the theory suggested by the late W. James, and supported by the Spiritual Philosophy, is that which affords the most intelligible and reasonable explanation.

## II. THE PERSONALITY OF GOD

The personality of man, as was stated in the last chapter, is the one outstanding fact respecting ourselves and our past history of which we can never entertain a doubt. But the doctrine that Personality is also an attribute of the Divine Being is by no means so simple and self-evident. By many, perhaps by most people, it will be regarded as a self-evident proposition, and accepted as one of the necessary thoughts of God.

It must be admitted, however, that the two personalities, the human and the Divine, do not stand on precisely the same footing; and the question, therefore, is one which requires more careful consideration; especially is this the case, seeing that some supporters of Cosmism and the Cosmic Philosophy, notably the late John Fiske, have categorically denied the possibility of a Divine Personality. Their main argument for doing this arises from the Infinite Nature of God; and Infinity and Personality, they say, cannot co-exist. They are incompatible. But are we sure this argument is a sound one?



What did we say was the origin of Personality? We said, quoting the dictum of M. Bergson, that Life is consciousness, and that Personality in man, like behaviour in animals, is the expression of consciousness.

If this be true, then it follows, that the Personality of every living creature will vary in proportion to the degree of consciousness possessed by it; and the only limit to its personality will be the limit of its consciousness. If, therefore, the consciousness of God be infinite, as we are bound to believe it is, then the Personality of God must also be infinite.

Perhaps the earliest attempt to define Personality (= *persona*) was that of Boethius, who called it, "The rational individual substance of Nature."<sup>1</sup>

Thomas Aquinas says, similarly, "A Person is that which is most perfect in the whole of Nature. It is, therefore, fitting that Personality, like every other perfection, should be attributed to God, though in a more excellent manner and degree than to any other creature."

Would it not, indeed, be a strange anomaly, if, while man through creative evolution has become a personal being, and attained his highest glory in the possession of a self-conscious personal spirit, the Creator should be without one?

But the idea seems unthinkable. For it

<sup>1</sup> "Persona est naturæ rationabilis individua substantia."

would be to degrade the Creator below the level of His creatures.

### THE SUPER-PERSONALITY OF GOD

If we could rightly appraise the consciousness of God, His wisdom, power and love, then we could understand His Personality. But, since the former is impossible, so also is the latter.

Herein, then, we must see and acknowledge with St. Thomas Aquinas, the Super-Personality of God. At the same time we must guard against supposing that the admission alters in the slightest degree the essential and fundamental principle of Personality, which consists in the power of a thinking, willing agent to give expression to his thought and will.

Let us look somewhat more closely into this point.

First it must be admitted that the difference between the Divine and human Personalities is immeasurably great. And this fact is fully recognized and described in the eloquent language of the Hebrew Prophet.

“Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?

“It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than Sheol; what canst thou know?

“The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.”—Job xi. 7–9.

Again, “To whom, then, will ye liken God?

or what likeness will ye compare unto Him ?"—Isa. xl. 18.

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways."—Isa. lv. 8.

The answer to the first question, according to the principles of the Spiritual Philosophy, is that the method by which Nature has reached its present state of perfection is that of Creative Evolution, in which the vital energy and motive power, so to speak, is none other than the life-giving Spirit of God immanent in Nature and the whole Universe.

Nothing less than this will suffice to account for the full content and complement of the natural order of things as we experience it.<sup>1</sup>

But how about the second question ? What does this method of creation reveal, as to the nature of the energy employed and its mode of operation ?

The following are among the chief characteristics of this method of Creative Evolution, which I can do no more than mention by name.

<sup>1</sup> "We cannot think of the world, as something which, even for a moment, moves independently of God, and in which God intervenes to correct or adjust ; but neither, on the other hand, can we think of the world-process, in anything less than its entirety, as supplying an exposition of the Divine purpose of Christ. Only in the life of Christ is this manifestation given. What we see in Him is what we should see in the history of the Universe, if we could apprehend that history in its completeness. What have been called Immanence and Transcendence are here perfectly combined, and this without the smallest sacrifice of one to the other."—"Mens Creatrix," by Rev. W. Temple, pp. 317-318.



1. Continuous progress from lower to higher forms of development.

2. Increased variety and higher values of the life evolved, ever ascending through the physical to the psychical, from the moral to the spiritual.

THE ARGUMENT FOR THE PERSONALITY OF GOD AS  
DEDUCIBLE FROM NATURE, AND THE METHOD  
OF CREATION AND GOVERNMENT THEREIN  
EMPLOYED

It can scarcely be necessary to repeat once more the suggestions of the Spiritual Philosophy with regard to the Divine Method of Creative Evolution and Government of the Universe, nor will I do so.

But this we know, that it is impossible to study the works of Nature without perceiving unmistakable marks of intelligence, thought and design. Beauty, too, in countless forms of loveliness is there; the beauty of the Poem, the Symphony, the Temple.

Whatever may be the agency employed to bring about such sublime results, we are at no loss to perceive the principles which have guided the Creator in His work.

UNITY AND DIRECTIVITY

There is unity and consistency of purpose: there is selection and directivity in the choice of

means employed for the attainment of that purpose. We see here, not only thought but forethought, which perceives the end from the beginning, and which is working up to it through countless ages, with a patient and passionless persistence, which nothing can resist.

But to what conclusion does this wonderful drama of Nature point?

If Nature is a poem, where is the Poet? If there is thought, where is the Thinker? If there is beauty, where is the Artist and Painter? If there is purpose and directivity, where is the Mind that designs and chooses and wills?

That all these things are present to our experience; that somehow they have been produced through the method and process of Creative Evolution, seems now to be generally admitted. What, then, is the Efficient Cause?

Can lifeless, inorganic matter generate life and vital organisms?

Does not thought presuppose a Thinker? The poem a Poet? Beauty an Artist, and so on?

Can Materialism, or even Cosmic Philosophy, satisfy the demand of reason, that for every Effect there must be an adequate and congruous Cause? I do not think it possible.

Nothing, as it seems to me, can satisfy the imperative demand which Nature herself imposes on her children except the voluntary agency of a Personal God.

## CONCLUDING NOTE

Though it may seem to be anticipating the chapter on the Incarnation, I cannot forbear to point out here, that Jesus ever directed His disciples to Nature as the standing witness to the Personality of God and as their heavenly Father.





## PART II





## CHAPTER I

### THE CREATION AND FALL OF MAN ACCORDING TO THE BIBLICAL RECORD

THE Biblical account of the Creation and Fall of Man is contained in the first three chapters of Genesis. Though, in fact, we have two accounts, assigned to two different narrators—the first Elohist, the second Jehovistic; moreover there are important differences in the two accounts, which it is not my purpose to enter into—I must regard the two records as virtually one, and select only such passages and details as have an intimate bearing on the subject before us.

#### OBSERVATIONS ON THE BIBLICAL RECORD

1. The whole record, so far as the Creation and Fall of Man are concerned, is figurative, allegorical and spiritual. Nor must we attempt, I think, to put a literal or anthropomorphic interpretation upon it.

2. “And God said, Let us make man in our image after our likeness” (Gen. i. 26).

But God is a Spirit.

He is intelligent.

Above all, He is free.

Therefore, if man was to be made in "the image and likeness of God," he must resemble Him in these respects. He must not only be spiritual and intelligent, he must be free ; that is, possessed of free-will to choose for himself between good and evil. "Both these words," says Dr. Driver, "refer here evidently to spiritual resemblance alone ; and the duplication of synonyms is intended simply to emphasize the idea of resemblance,"<sup>1</sup> and he further enlarges on the meaning and consequences of this resemblance thus : "It can be nothing but the gift of self-conscious reason—and may we not add of free-will—which is possessed by man, but by no other animal." It is this resemblance which enables us to pass beyond ourselves, which endows us with the *moral sense* and the capacity to distinguish right from wrong, good from evil ; and the faculty for knowing God and entering into spiritual communion with Him.

If, moreover, we may venture, with the utmost reverence, to ask what was the Divine idea which led to the creation of man and the utterance of those fateful words, "Let us make man in our own image and likeness," will not our answer be somewhat of this sort? First, for the display of His wisdom, power and love ; secondly, to call into being creatures like Himself, to love Him as

<sup>1</sup> Driver on Gen., p. 15.

their Father, and worship Him as their God. But this homage and worship must be that of freedom and choice, and not of necessity or compulsion. None other could He accept.

### OBS. 3.—THE TWO TREES

“And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food; the Tree of Life also in the midst of the garden, and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil” (Gen. ii. 9).

“And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat” (v. 16).

“But of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (v. 17).

What was the inner spiritual meaning and reality which underlay all this symbolism?

St. Augustine regarded the *Tree of Life* as a sacrament or symbol of life eternal. That it referred, not to temporal, but to eternal life, seems to be implied in Gen. iii. 22, “Lest he take also of the Tree of Life, and eat and live for ever.”

Note, that man was not forbidden to eat of this tree, but only of “the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.”

Of what was this Tree the symbol? What



lessons or inferences has it to teach us? Why should it have been planted in Eden, and why should man have been forbidden to eat of it under pain of death?

(1) It would seem to imply that good and evil existed before creation; that both were known to God and permitted by Him to exist, even in Eden, and to form part of a man's environment.

(2) That in his primitive condition man was conscious of nothing but good, and therefore incapable of evil and sin.

(3) The command not to eat, etc., would seem to have had a double purpose in view. First to keep man in his state of pristine innocence; secondly, as a test of his obedience and allegiance to God.

If man knew nothing but good, he could not sin. But if and when he became conscious of evil as well as good, from that time forward the possibility arose for a being possessing the power of choice and free-will to choose the evil instead of the good, and so incur the penalty of sin, which is death.

Such was the view of St. Jerome, who paraphrases the warning, "*Thou shalt surely die*," thus: "*Thou shalt become mortal or liable to death.*"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Rom. vii. 21 ff., in which the Apostle records his own personal experience of conflict between good and evil in mind and body, in the flesh and the spirit, "I find then the law, that to me who would do good, evil is present."

OBS. 4.—THE FALL REGARDED FROM THE SIDE OF  
CREATIVE EVOLUTION

Regarded from the standpoint of Creative Evolution, the Biblical story and tradition of the Fall would seem to denote the transition of man, from a state of primæval barbarism but little removed from that of the lower animals, and devoid of moral sensibility, to the far higher state of moral consciousness and spiritual aspiration.

Previous to the birth of this consciousness man could not, strictly speaking, be capable or guilty of sin. Sin only became possible for him when he learned to distinguish good from evil, and when, through the temptations of "the world, the flesh and the devil," and the allurements of the passions and appetites and the inherited instincts of his lower animal ancestry, he should wilfully choose the evil instead of the good, and entail upon himself, and perhaps his offspring, the punishment of death.

Writing on the subject of man's Creation and Fall, Dr. Driver has the following remarks :

"The evidence of archæology, geology, biology and the allied sciences points to the conclusion that man, so far from having begun his existence on the globe in the happy surroundings of an Eden, has slowly emerged from a state of savagery, in which he was, externally at least, but little removed from the brute creation. His primitive

condition was not one of harmony and happiness, but of fierce conflict against opposing forces. Pain and death prevailed upon the earth before man made his appearance, and have, it would seem, been prime factors in his evolution" (p. 36).

Again, p. 56: "The narrative teaches us that man possesses a *moral nature*, which must be exercised and tested; and a command is accordingly laid upon him for the purpose. The command is broken and man falls thereby from his state of innocence, and forfeits the blessing of the Divine favour, and the Divine presence, which he had before enjoyed. The command can be meant only to represent, as in a figure, the moral law, a sense of which awoke—though we cannot tell when or where—in primitive man, but almost as soon as it did awake was contravened."

"The narrative also teaches us that man possesses *free will*. He was created with the capacity to remain innocent, but also with the capacity to sin. Temptation, though it does not proceed from God (James i. 13 ff.) is permitted by Him; it tests man's character, and tends to strengthen and perfect it, by giving him the opportunity of manifesting his readiness to prefer God's Will to his own, and thereby of establishing a habit of goodness."

"All that as Christian theologians we are called upon to believe is, that a time arrived (in



the process of evolution and psychical development) when man's faculties were sufficiently developed for him to become conscious of a moral law, and that, having become conscious of it, he broke it." <sup>1</sup>

OBS. 5.—THE TEMPTATION OF THE SERPENT, AS THE EMBLEM OF THE EVIL ONE, AND THE GREAT ANTI-NOMY

"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die ; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil " (Gen. iii. 4, 5).

Observe, first, that the truth of the latter part of the temptation appears to be admitted in vers. 22, 23, "Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil," etc.

Observe, secondly, the insinuation that the command not to touch, or eat, of the forbidden tree proceeded from envy and fear on God's part, lest His creature man should become like Himself—a suggestion which is quite impossible and inconsistent with the statement (Gen. i. 27) where we are told that God made man in "His own image and likeness."

But, behind all this, we cannot fail to recognize the background of a real mystery—the mystery of evil, the mystery of an evil spirit in rebellion

<sup>1</sup> Driver on Genesis, pp. 36-56.

against God, and seeking to make others rebels like himself.

For as the purpose of God in giving the command was twofold, first as a test of obedience, and, secondly, to preserve man in the state of innocence; so the purpose of the Evil One was twofold, first to beguile man into a fatal act of disobedience, and, secondly, to beget in him a conscious knowledge of evil without which he could not, in the true sense of the word, be guilty of sin.

“Of man’s first disobedience, and the fruit  
Of that forbidden Tree, whose mortal taste  
Brought death into the world and all our woe,  
With loss of Eden, . . .  
Sing heavenly muse.”

The command not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and the threat of death if they did so, made their position one of trial and probation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There is also little doubt that some of the details show a striking resemblance to the Babylonian record. See Sayce’s “Higher Criticism,” p. 104.

“The Wicked Serpent,” “The Serpent of Darkness,” was mentioned in Sumerian texts, and Mr. Boscawen has lately found a Babylonian fragment, forming part of the third tablet of the Creation Series, in which the Fall of Man seems to be described in plain terms. He gives the following translation of it :—

“In sin one with another in compact joins,  
The command was established in the garden of the god,  
The Asnan tree they ate, they broke in two,  
Its stalk they destroyed,  
The sweet juice which injures the body.  
Great is their sin. Themselves they exalted,  
To Merodach, their Redeemer, he appointed their fate.”

The door through which the tempter might enter was left open, an advantage of which he was only too ready to make use of. And here is the crux of the whole situation. How came there to be such a malevolent spirit at all; here, too, in the very Garden of Eden itself? If he was a fallen angel, how came he to his fall? What was his previous history? We know not, nor have we the means of knowing.

This at least seems certain, that he existed previous to the Creation Epoch, and that it was owing to his instigation and temptation that our first parents fell into sin, and were driven from paradise.

OBS. 6. God's judgment on the three offenders, the serpent, the woman, and the man, is recorded in Gen. iii. 14-19. Neither time nor space will permit of a detailed examination of the several portions of the judgment, and only that part contained in *v.* 15 will engage our attention. It reads as follows: "And I will put enmity between thee (the serpent) and the woman, and between

In a seal figured by the late Mr. George Smith, in his "Chaldean Genesis," p. 88, a scene is represented in many ways resembling the Fall. A man and woman are seated on either side of a tree, from whose branches hang rich clusters of fruit, while behind the woman a serpent is seen rearing its head.

In the ancient church of Stow, Lincolnshire, there is a large and remarkable font, the basement of which is encircled by a serpent or dragon carved in stone and representing the Devil who beguiled our first parents to their ruin. In the Third Tablet of the Babylonian Creation Epic the wicked deeds of Tiamat, the spirit of evil, are described.



thy seed and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Here again God's judgment is couched, as in the rest of the narrative, in the figurative language of symbol and metaphor. And this again demands a spiritual interpretation, if we would arrive at its inner meaning and significance.

What, then, is the condition and position to which, according to the Bible story, mankind was brought by the Fall of Man?

His life henceforth was to be one of increasing enmity and strife between the Powers of Good and Evil.

He must realize the Great Antinomy as a stern fact in his moral and spiritual experience, because it is for no less a stake than the possession of his soul that the Powers of Light and Darkness are contending. But he is free to make his choice between the two. Hence his position has become one of trial and probation. According to his choice such will be his lot for time and eternity.

A solemn position indeed ! and fraught with consequences of unspeakable moment. For man becomes responsible to himself, and the arbiter of his own destiny.

When God had finished the work of Creation, including man himself, we read that He pronounced it "very good." But could He say so now? Alas ! no. For millions upon millions, who are born into this world, life is a tragedy : a tragedy all the more

tragic because it is the result in a very large degree of man's own sin and depravity.

What then? Shall we say that God's loving purpose in Creative Evolution has been frustrated? that the power of Evil has triumphed over that of God? Let us not say that, until we have heard what God has to say, speaking to us through His Incarnate Word, and in the accents of the Spirit of Truth and Love.<sup>1</sup>

These words, "It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel," though they predict only a state of perpetual enmity and strife between the contending Powers of Light and Darkness, have ever been held to justify the inference and assurance of the final and complete victory of the former and the utter destruction of the latter. Like Pandora's box, there is hope at the bottom.

They have been called the *Protevangelium*—the first faint and distant echoes of the Gospel message of salvation.

To change the metaphor, they are like the first streak of dawn in the eastern sky, which will hereafter flood the world with light.

But, while I hold that this agnostic attitude is that which best becomes us to take respecting the Problem of Evil, I perceive there are certain facts and aspects of it, and certain conclusions and inferences to be drawn, which fall more within the

<sup>1</sup> *E.g.*, In the provision God has made, "God so loved," etc.

range of our knowledge and experience, and which should not be overlooked.

The first of these is the argument arising from the adaptation of man to a mixed environment of Good and Evil.

The second is the harmony and correspondence between the doctrines of the moral and spiritual advancement of humanity as taught by Holy Scripture on the one hand, and by the Spiritual Philosophy and Creative Evolution, on the other.

Much might be said on both these points, but I can only indicate the main outlines of the argument in each case.

#### 1ST.—A MIXED ENVIRONMENT

An environment in which both good and evil are present seems to be that which is most congruous with the moral and metaphysical constitution of such a being as man, through the method of Creative Evolution, has come to be.

Without attempting to define by what steps man became possessed of such moral faculties, as *e.g.* discrimination between good and evil, choice, and free-will, there is no doubt he does possess them; and this fact again seems to imply the logical necessity for an environment suitable for their exercise and development. In other words, there is a mutual adaptation and correspondence to be observed between the mixed environment of good and evil in which man finds himself



placed, and the faculties which by some means he has inherited.

## 2ND.—IDENTITY OF METHOD—SCRIPTURE AND SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHY IN ACCORD

The next point to which I would call attention is the identity of the method assigned for the future progress of mankind by the inspired records on the one hand, and by the Spiritual Philosophy on the other.

In both we are taught that the greater good, the higher moral and spiritual values are only to be secured through conflict with and victory over the evil.

The Scriptural doctrine of the struggle between the Powers of Good and Evil, and that the Good is only to be secured through and by victory over the Evil, is supported and confirmed by the doctrine and theory of Creative Evolution. For that doctrine teaches us that man has become what he is, a moral and spiritual and religious creature, not as it were *per saltum* by a leap, but through gradual and successive increments of consciousness. First in the physical and animal stage, then in the psychic, metaphysical and spiritual stage.

But, in his progress upward from the lower to the higher stage, man does not entirely cast off those passions, appetites, and propensities which belong to the physical and animal. And here it

is that the struggle begins, between the bias and propensities of the lower animal nature and those higher moral and spiritual perceptions and aspirations of the soul. Only by entering into this struggle and resisting the former, and yielding himself to the latter, is it possible for man to make further progress towards perfection.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The following are some of Dr. Driver's comments on the Creation narrative.

"The narrative purports to account for the entrance into the world of sin, suffering and shortened life. In carrying out this purpose it is less faithful to historical than to moral and religious truth. The narrative is valuable, therefore, not as a description of historical events, but as a declaration of certain important ideas." (Quoted from Wade's "O.T. History.")

Again, p. 52: "These and other elements in the narrative, as the cherubim and the flaming sword, perhaps even the serpent (*cp.* the Babylonian *Tiamat*), have in fact a mythical colouring, and suggest the inference that they have been derived ultimately from a mythical source. There are also features tending specially to connect the narrative with Babylonia."

Again, p. 54: "Of the actual beginnings of man upon this earth we know nothing; science, by a patient collection of facts, may make certain conclusions as to our physical antecedents and ancestry, more or less probable, but that is all. The general trend of modern science is to regard man as having developed out of the humbler anthropoid ancestors; and the possibility of this theory being true, must at least be reckoned with by the theologian. . . . But at what moment, or with what feelings, man first awoke to consciousness of himself we know as little as we know in the case of an infant child."

## CHAPTER II

### THE GREAT ANTINOMY<sup>1</sup>

The witness of Jesus.

REFERRING again to the chapter on the Biblical Record of the Fall of Man, it was pointed out that, though the figurative and allegorical setting forbade a literal interpretation, there were still certain underlying facts and conclusions which could scarcely be disputed.

1. The first was this: that the story of the Fall seemed to punctuate a time when a mighty change and development took place in man's moral and psychical nature. This change was of momentous import; for by it man became conscious of good and evil, and therefore liable to temptation and sin.

2. The second great truth which seemed to underlie the symbolism of the Record was this; that a Power of Evil was already in existence and watching for an opportunity to tempt our first

<sup>1</sup> I do not use the expression in the strictly Kantian sense, as denoting the opposition between two sets of Theses and Antitheses, for the most part theoretical and metaphysical, but as the most convenient term to express the radical and actual antagonism between the Powers and Principles of Good and Evil.



parents to sin and disobedience, and so defeat the purpose of God in the creation of man.

Whether or not this be the true interpretation of the Fall, we do know now by practical experience that somehow human nature has become vitiated, depraved, and prone to sin.

But this is not a full and complete description of man's present moral and spiritual condition. If, on the one hand, his nature has become depraved and prone to sin, on the other, he has become conscious of the good and the beauty of holiness. Even in the very act of sin there is an internal monitor—the still, small voice of conscience—which rises up and condemns him.

Whence comes this strange discord and strife? To attribute it all to the lusts and appetites and passions, which man has inherited from his lower animal ancestry, is not enough; for these in themselves are, for the most part, not evil but good, necessary for the preservation of life and the propagation of the species. They only become evil when immoderately gratified to satisfy the unbridled lusts of the flesh.

No! We must find a deeper cause than this. And where shall we find it, if not in the great Antinomy, or struggle between the powers and principles of Good and Evil?

“Man fell,” says Canon Wilson,<sup>1</sup> “according to Science, when he first became conscious of

<sup>1</sup> In an address to the Church Congress of 1896.

the conflict of freedom and conscience. To the Evolutionist sin is not an innovation, but is the survival or misuse of habits and tendencies that were incidental to an earlier stage in his development whether of the individual or the race, and were not originally sinful but were actually useful. Their sinfulness lies in their anachronism; in their resistance to the evolutionary and divine force that makes for moral development and righteousness. Sin is the violation of a man's higher nature which he finds within, parallel to a lower nature. Under the law of evolution God has given men conscience which condemns certain actions, and under this law such actions pass through the stages, first of disapproval by the finer souls, then of condemnation by the ordinary conscience, and at last of punishment by the action of society. . . . Now, this conflict of freedom and conscience is precisely what is related as 'The Fall,' *sub specie historiæ*. It tells of the fall of a creature from unconscious innocence (the non-moral state) to conscious guilt, expressing itself in hiding from the presence of God. But this fall from innocence was in another sense a rise to a higher grade of being. It is in this sense that the theory of evolution teaches us to interpret the story of the Fall."

Neither Evolution nor the birth of moral consciousness creates this Antinomy and antagonism. It is of the nature of a supersensuous,

timeless act, existing prior to Evolution, but yet profoundly influencing it, and forming, so to speak, the metaphysical medium in which the whole process and every act of it takes place.

### THE LIFE OF MAN THE BATTLE-GROUND OF THE GREAT ANTINOMY

Nor does the fact of this Antinomy depend for its proof on merely logical or metaphysical arguments like the above. It is a fact vouched for by our own experience in a thousand ways. Our whole life from infancy to old age is the arena in which the two opposing powers of good and evil, of truth and falsehood, of virtue and vice, are ever at war. Nay, we may go even a step further.

That this Antinomy does exist and finds its sphere of activity, even in the secret recesses of the soul of man, not even the Christian Advocate will deny, for on almost every page of Holy Scripture its prevalence and reality are recognized.

### THE WITNESS OF JESUS TO THE GREAT ANTINOMY

Nothing is clearer than that Christ fully recognized, and taught His followers to recognize, the fact of the great Antinomy, the radical antagonism between the powers and spirits of Good and Evil. There are good angels and bad angels. And the souls of men are the prize for which



they are engaged in ceaseless strife. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the Devil."<sup>1</sup>

The Jews accused Jesus of casting out devils by Beelzebub. What was His reply?

"If I by the finger of God cast out devils, then is the Kingdom of God come upon you. When the strong man fully armed guardeth his own court, his goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him his whole armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils."<sup>2</sup>

Could words be plainer?

"He said unto them, I beheld Satan fallen, as lightning from heaven."<sup>3</sup>

"The prince of the world cometh, and he hath nothing in Me."<sup>4</sup>

"Ye are of your father the Devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and stood not in the truth . . . he is a liar, and the father thereof."<sup>5</sup>

Thus did Jesus bear witness to the great Antinomy; to the presence, the power, and the personality of the principle of Evil, which is in ceaseless hostility to "the Good."

"Our enemies," says Dean Inge, "are unseen

<sup>1</sup> 1 John iii. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xi. 20-22.

<sup>3</sup> Luke x. 18.

<sup>4</sup> John xiv. 30, and xvi. 11.

<sup>5</sup> John viii. 44.

forces, hostile wills. In this sense I believe in evil spirits, which are active and potent in our world, the world of soul-making, though I do not believe they are real rivals of God."—*Sermon on the Powers of Evil.*

## CHAPTER III

### THE CALL OF ABRAM, AND THE PROMISE TO HIM

The Messianic hope—Catena of texts.

WE must regard the call of Abram as an event of unique importance in the religious history of the world. It marked the commencement of a new era, in which the relation which had previously existed between the creature man and his Creator God was to undergo a striking change and development.

Hitherto men in various nations had been "seeking after God, if haply they might find Him." And led by religious instinct, and taught in the first instance by Nature, that is by the Divine Spirit immanent in Nature, their quest had not been in vain. For as St. Peter said to Cornelius (Acts x. 35), "In every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him."<sup>1</sup> That their concept of Him was crude, imperfect, anthropomorphic; that they addressed Him under various names, such as Ea or Merodach or Father Nannar, and worshipped Him under the Nature symbols of Sun or Moon, was not to be wondered at.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Rom. ii. 14, 15.



But with the call of Abram, whose name was afterwards changed to Abraham, was to commence a clearer intimation of the Divine Will. The spirit of man was to be brought into closer relation with the Spirit of God. God, Who had hitherto only spoken to man through the voice of Nature, was now to enter on terms of what might almost be called personal friendship and communion with the spirit of man.

“ Since Noah,” says Dr. Driver, “ the line of Shem has been that in which the knowledge of the true God has been perpetuated ; and now in the person of Abram, this knowledge reaches a higher stage ; Abram is the recipient of fuller and more distinct revelations of God ” ( “ Genesis,” p. 144 ).

(a) THE CALL OF ABRAHAM AND THE COVENANT OF PROMISE.

With the Call of Abraham we enter on a higher stage in the manifestation of God, through the Immanent Spirit of Wisdom, to mankind. We have traced in the sacred literature of Chaldea and Babylonia the rise and progress of the religious sentiment from its earliest and lowest forms of Shamanism, Totemism, and magic to its higher development as expressed in the Hymns to the gods, the Penitential Psalms and Litanies. We have seen how these latter bear witness to the birth of the concept of sin, of contrition and sorrow for it, of desire for pardon, of prayer for

deliverance from its power. I think, too, we must have seen how, while in its outward form the religion of these ancients was polytheistic, there was a latent and unconscious movement towards Monotheism, a secret and instinctive idea that the true Deity to be worshipped was after all One and Supreme. The magnificent Hymn to Father Nannar seems to afford sufficient proof of this. Thus far the sacred scripts of Babylonia brought us, but no further.

If any clearer manifestation of the Presence and Will of God was ever to be given to mankind, it must be sought and found, I am convinced, in the sacred records of the Hebrew branch of the great Semitic family.

How the Semitic tribes invaded Chaldea, and gradually subdued its earlier inhabitants, the Accadians, so far as it is known at all, is a matter to which we can only make a passing allusion. But this we know, that in doing so, they adopted both the religion and, in a certain sense, the language of the people they conquered.

The Messianic hope is ever regarded as taking its rise in the call of Abram. He was the head and founder of the House of Israel: "Father Abraham" became his recognized title down to the remotest posterity. "Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad." In the parable of Dives and Lazarus this is the name by which he is addressed.

A title of unique honour and distinction is conferred upon him as "The Father of the faithful."

"Abraham," says Dr. Driver (note on Gen. xviii. 16-22), "holds a unique position, partly as the depository of a blessing for all nations; partly as having been chosen by God to found a house whose members should all study to follow after righteousness."

Neither of these statements will be disputed. Abram was the recipient of a great promise. It is equally certain that Abraham was the founder of the House of Israel.

But before passing on I should like to remind my readers of the relation in which this fuller manifestation stands to that which engaged our attention in the chapter on the Babylonian Psalms, and Hymns, and Litanies.

In the first place, according to the thesis laid down, as one of the fundamental principles of the Spiritual Philosophy, the Spirit of God, immanent in Nature and the whole Universe, is the one and only source of religious consciousness and divine revelation. So far as those ancient Accadians and Babylonians did arrive at a true though imperfect knowledge of God, of good and evil, of righteousness and sin, it was through the illuminating, sanctifying influence of the Hokmah, the Holy Spirit of Wisdom. Those wonderful hymns and psalms were witness to the Spirit of



God working on the cognate spirit of man. As the patriarch Job said, "There is a spirit in man : and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding" (xxxii. 8). Also Wisdom xii. 1.

In the next place, we must remember that Abram and his descendants belonged to the same stock as those Semites who conquered the Accadians, but appropriated and greatly enriched their sacred literature.

While Terah and his family dwelt in their native city of Ur, and afterwards when they migrated to Haran, there seems nothing improbable in the thought that they may have conformed in some degree to the religious worship of the people amongst whom they lived, seeing that as yet Yahveh had not made Himself known by Name.

Possibly they may have confessed their sins in the penitential psalms, or sung the praises of the Supreme Deity in chanting with the congregation the sublime hymn to Father Nannar. But, whether this be so or not, we can scarcely doubt that Abram would be well acquainted with the liturgy of the splendid temples at Ur and Haran. The many striking points of resemblance between the Hebrew and Babylonian psalms would seem to justify such a belief.

Was then that inspiration to cease with the religious culture of these Babylonian Moon or Sun worshippers? Was no further manifestation

of the Supreme Being to be vouchsafed to mankind? We cannot entertain such a thought. For, if so, there would be an end of evolution and development in the region of man's psychic and spiritual nature. How, then, was it to be accomplished?

The answer, I think, must be found in the call of Abram, and all that followed from it. With that event the sacred history of the Hebrews, or Jews, as we now commonly call them, began.

#### (b) THE PROMISE OF GOD TO ABRAM

"Now the Lord said<sup>1</sup> unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will shew thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. xii. 1-3).

What is there to be said about this promise?

1st. It is only the latter part that need detain us. "And in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

2nd. It is *evangelical* in character—the promise of a blessing.

<sup>1</sup> "Jehovah said," etc. How are we to understand this expression? "God's voice is to be thought of not as something external, but as heard within Abram's inmost soul" (Delitzsch. Cf. 2 Sam. xxiii. 2).

3rd. It is universal, or *catholic* in extent—a blessing in which all mankind are to share.

4th. It is to be conveyed and realized through the seed, *i.e.* some descendant who should be of the House of Israel.

5th. Beyond this, there was nothing definite, either—

(a) as to the particular seed ;

(b) as to the nature of the blessing ;

(c) as to the mode and time of its fulfilment.

For further light on these three points we can but have recourse to the sacred records of the House of Israel. In them we find, not only that the promise was never lost sight of, but that all down the ages in the inspired utterances of Prophet and Psalmist, of Priest and King, speaking as we believe they were moved by the Immanent Spirit of God, it became more and more clearly defined.

The references, which relate to the promise, contained in the Old Testament Scriptures, are far too numerous and extensive to admit of anything like a complete enumeration. A brief catena of the more important of them must suffice.

#### CATENA OF PASSAGES RELATING TO THE PROMISE TO ABRAHAM AND ITS FULFILMENT

The promise was repeated in almost identical terms to Abraham in Gen. xviii. 18 and Gen. xxii. 18.



To Isaac, Gen. xxvi. 4, 5.

To Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 14. *Cf.* 2 Sam. vii. 12-16.

#### THE SCEPTRE OF SHILOH

Gen. xlix. 10, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh come."

Psalm lxxii. can hardly be regarded in any other light than an expansion of the same theme, a prophetic forecast of the character of this heaven-sent King, and the beneficence of the world-wide kingdom He would establish on the earth. "Men shall be blessed in Him. All nations shall call Him blessed."

In the Book of Isaiah we come across a number of passages, which are clearly predictive and descriptive of some Prince of the House of David, who should not only restore the fallen fortunes of Israel, and gather together the exiles from all countries whither they had been carried captive, but should be "a light to the Gentiles, and Jehovah's salvation to the ends of the earth" (Isaiah xlix. 6).

#### IMMANUEL, THE VIRGIN'S SON

Another utterance of Isaiah, though not without its difficulties, is believed by many of the best commentators to have reference to the promised Seed and His transcendent nature, both human

and divine. His name is to be called *Immanuel*, i.e. "*God with us*" (Isaiah vii. 14).

And His earthly royalty is to be merged in the higher and more perfect sovereignty of the Messiah.

2 Sam. vii. 4-16. The prophet Nathan announces to David God's promise. 13. "He shall build a house for My Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever."

#### JEREMIAH AND THE RIGHTEOUS BRANCH

In Jeremiah xxiii. 5, 6, we have a remarkable prediction of a great King whom Jehovah would raise up to rule over the House of Israel.

"I will raise unto David *a righteous Branch*, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. . . . And this is the name whereby He shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness" (Jehovah *Zedkenu*). —

#### THE DIVINE SON

Another passage, even still more remarkable, as prophetic of the transcendent nature of the promised Deliverer, and the universal character of His kingdom and reign, is that of Isaiah ix. 6, 7, "*Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given*," etc. This prediction must be considered in connection with that of chapter vii. 14, and as a more detailed description of its content and meaning. The child who is to be born is doubtless to be identified with the Virgin's Son, Immanuel, and it has been pointed

out that the eight epithets, or attributes, assigned as characteristic of the future Deliverer may be resolved into four couplets :

1. Wonderful, Counsellor.
2. God the Mighty One.
3. The Father of Eternity.
4. The Prince of Peace.

#### THE PRINCE OF PEACE

The kingdom to be set up is to be a kingdom characterized by peace and not war. It is to "be established not by force of arms, but with justice and judgment, for ever," and therefore an everlasting kingdom.

#### THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH

Another very remarkable cluster of prophecies of the promised Seed is that in which He is designated as "the Servant of Jehovah." "My righteous Servant."

In chapter xlii. we first meet with these very remarkable prophecies. "Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; Mine Elect, in whom My soul delighteth; I have put My spirit upon Him. He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles."

In chapter xlix. 5 it is predicted of Him that He shall be "for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation to the ends of the earth."

It is, however, in chapter lii. 13, and liii. we



find the clearest predictions of "the Servant of the Lord," descending even down to a description of His bodily form and physiognomy.

#### A MAN OF SORROWS

"His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men."

"He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

In some mysterious manner He was to "bear our griefs and carry our sorrows," and "be wounded for our transgressions," and "by His stripes we are healed."

#### AN OFFERING FOR SIN

His soul was to be "made an offering for sin," and, when He should have done this, He should see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. "By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He hath poured out His soul unto death; and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

#### SOME REMARKS ON THE FOREGOING PROPHECIES

Without any overt reference to the promise to Abraham and his seed, they have this feature

in common, that they all relate, either directly or indirectly, either implicitly or explicitly, to some great blessing which was to descend upon the House of Israel, and through that House to be conveyed to all mankind.

As we follow these predictions downward through the ages and the sacred writings of the Jews, we find them ever becoming more assured and definite, until at length both the method and the means by which the promise was to be secured is not faintly foreshadowed. It was clearly to be through an Incarnation of some kind. "A heavenly child is to be born: a Divine Son is to be given."

Can any one imagine that this continuous and congruous stream of prophecy emanated from the brain of a few religious enthusiasts? If so, then I confess that man possesses an imagination far livelier than mine. But if such an one there be, let me ask him who inspired the sacred Hymn to Father Nannar, which in the sublimity of its conception of the Deity might well be ranked together with some of the noblest of the Hebrew Psalms?

To my mind there is but one theory, which can offer a satisfactory solution.

The Spirit of God, immanent in the Universe, and immanent in the souls of men, was using them both as His organ and mouthpiece for the purpose of His self-manifestation.

They are of a transcendent and spiritual

nature, and point forward to an Incarnation in which the Divine and human natures should be united. Such an Incarnation, should it ever take place, would constitute a fuller revelation of God to man, and a further step in psychic evolution and religious consciousness.

There remains but one further question to ask. Does the doctrine of the Incarnation, as it is believed and accepted by Christians, answer to the hopes and promises which these remarkable prophecies lead men to entertain? But this is a question I must reserve for more careful consideration in the next Chapter on the Incarnation.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE INCARNATION

What was the Messiah to be and to do?—Has He fulfilled the expectation?—The consciousness of Jesus—The teaching of Jesus.

HITHERTO we have been endeavouring to trace the past history of the psychological moral and spiritual development of mankind. And we have had under consideration what seem to have been the leading and cardinal events in that history.

We have, therefore, reached a coign of vantage from which to consider and form a fairly correct estimate of the great subject of the Incarnation.

We have seen how, under the process of Creative Evolution, the germ principle of Life—the *Elan vital* of Bergson—has gradually developed into the self-conscious soul of man, intelligent and free to choose, and conscious of good and evil in its environment.

We have been compelled to recognize the stern fact of the existence of a Power of Evil, antagonistic to the Good, which somehow has intervened in God's creation and brought sin into the world and sorrow and death as the inevitable result. Thus human nature has become the battle-ground of two opposing Powers; and the

prize for which they are contending is nothing less than the souls of men.

### THE CALL OF ABRAM

But the loving purpose of the Creator was not thus to be thwarted. And in the Call of Abram we beheld the inception of God's method for counteracting and defeating the work of the Evil One ; for the regeneration of mankind, and their restoration once more to the favour of God ; for neutralizing the poison and taint of sin in human nature, and inoculating it—if I may use a medical simile—with the antitoxin of holiness.

In that important event we seemed to catch the first echo of the gospel of peace and salvation for a guilty world. "Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it, and was glad." And the promise then given was never lost sight of. It was taken up and confirmed in an unbroken chain by the mouth of Prophet, Priest and King, speaking as they were moved by the Spirit of God. It only gathered strength and definiteness, as the centuries rolled by, till the time drew near for its fulfilment, and the Baptist sent messengers to Jesus, asking Him, "Art Thou He that should come, or look we for another ?"

And such in reality is the question which confronts the world to-day.

This is the position to which our studies in

the Spiritual Philosophy have brought us. Does the Incarnation fulfil the hopes and answer to the expectations which mankind were led to entertain?

What these hopes and expectations were, perhaps may be best understood from the long line of prophetic utterances which foretold the Incarnation.

WHAT WAS THE MESSIAH TO BE? WHAT WAS HE  
TO DO?

He was to be perfect man "of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting." Of the seed of the woman, and of a virgin born. And at the same time He was to be Divine, "The Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Ineffable mystery indeed! and realized "not by conversion of the Godhead into Flesh; but by taking of the Manhood into God."<sup>1</sup>

We can see and understand that the object and purpose of the Incarnation was four-fold.

WHAT WAS THE MESSIAH TO DO?

Let us not suppose for a moment we can fathom the mystery of the Incarnation, either in its nature, its necessity, or its object. For it is part of that greatest of all mysteries—the Great Antinomy. But though we cannot do this, for

<sup>1</sup> Athanasian Creed.



“great is the mystery of Godliness,” there is much that we can do.

We can see and understand that the work of the Messiah—the Incarnate *Logos* was not single but manifold.

We can see, for instance, four divisions of the work He came to do.

1. It was destructive. To destroy the works of the Devil.

2. It was constructive. To restore the God-like image in mankind, and reconcile man with his Maker.

3. It was sacrificial. “When Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.”

4. It was to be exemplary. To beget in the minds and hearts of men a consciousness of the beauty of truth and holiness by the exhibition of a life of purity and love.

Such was the work which Jesus came to do.

Undoubtedly it was on man's account, that the Eternal Word (*Logos*) became Incarnate, that He might undo the effect of the Fall in subjecting Man to the power of the Evil One. But to accomplish this it was necessary that the Saviour of mankind should Himself enter into the conflict with the Powers of Evil and bear the brunt of their deadly hostility. Had He failed, He would have been no Saviour, and history would hardly

have recorded His Name. But He did not fail, though His enemies put Him to the shameful death of the cross.

Nor should this surprise us, for even Plato foresaw and foretold, that "if there should appear in the world a man perfectly righteous, and caring for righteousness for its own sake, he would appear to others to be an assailant of morality, because he challenged their own moral habits, and they would scourge and crucify him."

"O loving wisdom of our God,  
When all was sin and shame,  
A second Adam to the fight  
And to the rescue came.

And that a higher gift than grace  
Should flesh and blood refine,  
God's presence, and His very Self  
And essence all Divine.

O generous love! that He who smote  
In man for man the foe,  
The double agony in man  
For man should undergo."

But if such was to be the nature of the promised Messiah—both human and Divine—and such the work He was to perform, can we say with full conviction, in the words of Peter, "We believe and are sure Thou art that Christ Who should come into the world"; "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"?

What was it that drew this confession from Peter? Nothing less than his own personal experience of the character and work of Jesus.

So must it be, *mutatis mutandis*, with all who would share the conviction and make the confession of the Apostle.

May we not say with truth of the Messiah, when He came, that He brought His credentials with Him? His spotless life and character, His all-conquering love of mankind, His sublime and superhuman consciousness; the authoritative nature of His teaching; all these serve to invest Him with attributes not less than Divine. And, though it is manifestly impossible to deal at length with them all, there are two of them at least on which I desire to make a few specific observations. They are first, the *Consciousness of Jesus*; secondly, the *Teaching of Jesus*.

## I. THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF JESUS

It would be almost an impertinence to labour this feature in the character of Jesus, because, if we may believe the Gospel records of His life, His sayings, and His ministry, they indicate in the clearest manner what was the inner consciousness which prompted them.

It will be remembered, that when we were discussing the subject of Life, I endeavoured to establish the following propositions.

1. Life is consciousness, *i.e.* consciousness is the measure of life in the vital organism.

2. Consciousness is the main constituent



element in Personality. And Personality will vary according to the degree of consciousness.

3. If life be consciousness, it follows as a necessary corollary that the deeper the insight and consciousness of the organism the higher and more conspicuous will be the character of its life.

Let us apply this line of argument in the case of the consciousness of Jesus.

Of all the proofs which Jesus offered in support of His claims to a Divine Nature, none to my mind is so convincing and at the same time so astonishing as His sublime consciousness.

And such seems to have been the impression formed of Him in the minds of those who had the best means of judging.

“Never man spake like this man.”

“He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.”

“Whence hath this man all these things?”

Think, too, of the marvellous character of the claims He made. As, for example, His claim “to forgive sins”; His claim to possess an eternal and timeless existence: “Before Abraham was I am.” “The witness that I have is greater than that of John . . . the very works that I do bear witness that the Father hath sent Me” (John v. 16).

The claim of “*Oneness*” with the Father, “I and the Father are One.” “He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father.”

What shall we say to such stupendous claims

as these? Were they true, or were they false? If they were true, then He must indeed have been Divine. If they were not, then they were the ravings of a wild, self-deceived enthusiast, and the language of presumptuous blasphemy. Which shall it be?

## II. THE TEACHING OF JESUS IN RESPECT TO NATURE AND THE UNIVERSE

The other point on which I wish to offer a few remarks relates to the teaching of Jesus in respect to Nature and the material Universe. This, too, I take to be a subject of cardinal importance at the present time when Science and Religion are thought by some to be irreconcilable.

### ANTITHESIS AND SYNTHESIS

Has it ever occurred to you, my reader, to recognize the important part played by these two factors in the affairs of mankind?

By *Antithesis* I suppose we mean two theses, propositions or principles, that are either opposed to, or contrasted with one another.

By *Synthesis* we understand the bringing of these two theses or propositions together, the harmonizing and redintegration of them, so as to form one united and consistent whole.

Let me give a few examples by way of illustration.

Nature and Revelation.

Science and Religion.

Physics and Metaphysics.

The Material and the Spiritual.

The Human and the Divine.

Phenomena and Noumena.

Between the several members of these Antitheses there is supposed to exist a certain contrast or opposition which isolates them from one another and makes them distinct and separate subjects. And it seems to me that many of the most serious errors into which mankind has fallen, whether in Philosophy, Science, Religion, or Politics, have been due to failure to enlist the power of syntheses, and so escape the dangers of prejudice and falsehood.<sup>1</sup>

And this brings me to the point in my remarks I wish more particularly to emphasize. It is this: Jesus ever claimed Nature for God. He ever taught His disciples to go to Nature if they would learn about God.

“Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God doth so

<sup>1</sup> As examples I would mention the Deists of the eighteenth century; the Materialists of Germany, with the late Ernest Hæckel as their protagonist; the adherents of Comte, with the worship of Humanity, in France; and the Cosmists, with the late John Fiske at their head, to whose Cosmic Philosophy an extended reference has already been made.



clothe the grass of the field, shall He not much more clothe you ? " (Matt. vi. 28-31).

" Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap nor gather into barns, and your Heavenly Father feedeth them " (v. 26).

" Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without the will of your Heavenly Father." " The very hairs of your head are numbered."

" He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust."

Thus did Jesus teach us to regard Nature and the material Universe as the self-manifestation of the Great Creator. Matter is but the plastic clay in the hand of the Divine Potter whereby He is ever giving outward and visible expression to His attributes of power and wisdom, of beauty and love. What we call the laws and ordinances of Nature Jesus teaches us are nothing less than the laws and ordinances of God.

But these claims of Jesus are of immense significance beyond their immediate application. They reveal Him to us as the great Reconciler of Antitheses ; the Redintegrator of elements and forces which were thought to be discordant and heterogeneous. He has taught us the lesson of *Synthesis*, and how, by its application, differences and antagonisms which were once deemed irreconcilable, are entirely removed as between Nature and Revelation ; Science and Religion ; Matter and Spirit ; Phenomena and Noumena, etc.

## CHAPTER V

### THE DISPENSATION OF THE SPIRIT

“THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE LORD AND GIVER OF  
LIFE”—THE NICENE CREED

WHEN the Immanent Spirit is spoken of as “the Lord and Giver of Life,” the term Life must be used in its widest sense as embracing all life, material and physical, psychic, moral and spiritual. He is the true energizing factor which has been at work, and is still at work in Nature and the Cosmos.

He is the Divine Potter, Painter, Sculptor, calling order out of chaos and fashioning inert formless matter into countless forms of life and beauty.

Look at the infinite variety of vegetable and animal species, allied and yet distinct; each with its law of development and heredity. What are these but examples and proofs of the presence and activity of the Divine and Immanent Spirit of God?

## THE "ELAN VITAL" AND CREATIVE EVOLUTION

Prof. Bergson has given a name to this vital principle. He calls it the *Elan vital*—the leap or push of life. But in its inner substantial reality it is the Immanent Spirit of God. Such is the interpretation which the Spiritual Philosophy would put upon it; and *Creative Evolution* is only a convenient name by which to denote the belief, that every manifestation of life is due to the life-giving Spirit of God.

## THE SPIRIT OF GOD IN HOLY SCRIPTURE

Generally speaking, the Holy Spirit stands out both in the Old and New Testaments as the Spirit of Inspiration and Prophecy. For as St. Peter said, "No scripture is of any private interpretation. But holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

Another general feature and characteristic of His presence and work, which must not be lost sight of, is His concurrence and co-operation with the Second Person of the Trinity—God the Word—in carrying out the Will of the Father for the salvation of mankind.

It is this feature, as it seems to me, which throws fresh light on the doctrine of the Incarnation, and the mystery of the twofold nature of Christ as Perfect God and Perfect Man. Not only was the Incarnation foretold, "Behold a



virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His Name Immanuel," but, when the time came, the promise was fulfilled through the agency of the Spirit. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the Most Highest shall overshadow thee." The human child Jesus, conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary, became the promised Messiah—the Anointed One, Perfect God and Perfect Man.

Nor was it only in the conception and birth of Jesus that the Spirit took so prominent a part in bringing about the Incarnation. Throughout the whole life and ministry of Jesus the Holy Spirit was His constant Guest and Inspiration.

"God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him" (John iii. 24). He descended on Him in His Baptism. He led Him into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil. It was "through the Eternal Spirit," we are told, that "He offered Himself without spot to God."<sup>1</sup> Nor was this co-operation to cease with His earthly life. On the contrary, He assured His followers it should be continued to the end of time.

"I will not leave you orphans; I will come unto you." "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of Truth."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Col. i. 19, and ii. 9.

<sup>2</sup> John xiv. 16. 17.

THE OFFICE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS TO CARRY  
FORWARD TO COMPLETION THE WORK BEGUN  
BY CHRIST

Moreover, He told His followers very explicitly what the office and work of the Spirit would be. To describe them generally, He was to carry forward and complete the work which Christ Jesus had Himself begun. "He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you." He was to be the great Teacher and Remembrancer. "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you."<sup>1</sup> Also the great Convincer "of sin, of righteousness, and judgment," and the Source and Leaven of sanctification and holiness in the souls and bodies of mankind.

Such, according to the teaching of Jesus, was to be some of the work of the Spirit. What does it all amount to? Is there any other name so aptly describes it, as that of "*A New Dispensation, a Dispensation of the Spirit of God*"?

Thus by the co-operation of the Word (*Logos*) or Son of God, with the Spirit of Wisdom (*Hokmah*), is human nature to be liberated from the power of evil—regenerated, sanctified. Thus is the image of God to be renewed and retraced in man, until he becomes once more "a partaker

<sup>1</sup> John xiv. 26; xvi. 8-11.

of the Divine Nature and made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light."

#### THE DISPENSATION OF THE SPIRIT

"What we see in the Incarnate Word is what we should see in the history of the Universe, if we could apprehend that history in its completeness. What we have called Immanence and Transcendence are here perfectly combined, and this without the slightest sacrifice of one to the other" ("Mens Creatrix," p. 318).

"The whole process of God's Self-revealing, which has been going on, through Nature, through History, through Prophets, comes to complete fulfilment in the Incarnation" (*Ibid.*, 317).

"Though God was guiding men in all ages before the Incarnation, that guidance took a new form from the Incarnation onwards. It is this new power of God which St. John calls the Spirit" (p. 319).

In the crucifixion of Jesus, Evil and the powers of Evil were for the time triumphant. "This is your hour and the power of darkness."

"They sent Christ to the cross; by the cross He completed His atoning work; from the cross He reigns over mankind" (Dr. W. Temple, "Mens Creatrix," p. 322).

But while all this is true, it is also true that the Incarnation was neither final nor complete in itself. His mission was, indeed, a spiritual mission,



intended for the regeneration, the uplifting and renewal of the whole race of mankind, in all ages and countries of the world. But it was too limited in the range of its manifestation. Only a favoured few of His compatriots and immediate followers could hear His words and see His works and profit by His teaching and example. Besides all this the doctrines and truths which Jesus wished to teach were sometimes of such a novel, and even startling character, that even His own disciples failed to grasp them. "What is this that He saith? We cannot tell what He saith." Even the learned Athenians, who prided themselves on their dialectic skill and acumen, the Epicureans and Stoics, accused Paul of being "a setter forth of strange gods, because he preached Jesus and the Resurrection." "May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is?"

Jesus was well aware of all this. Even towards the close of His ministry He found Himself bound to tell His chosen Apostles, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."<sup>1</sup>

So before He left them, He announced His intention of supplying the defect imposed by the limitations of time and space and human intelligence, "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter (Paraclete = Advocate), even the Spirit of Truth. . . . I will not leave you desolate; I come unto you."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John xvi. 12.

<sup>2</sup> John xiv. 16-18.

“ But when the Comforter is come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, He shall bear witness of Me, and ye also bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning.”<sup>1</sup>

When He was arraigned before the judgment-seat of Pilate He witnessed a good confession and boldly stated the great object for which He had taken our nature upon Him. “ For this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth.” Whereupon Pilate asked with contemptuous incredulity, “ What is truth ? ” Nevertheless, that was the end and object for which Jesus came and lived and died, “ to bear witness to the truth.” “ I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.” And what He had done He laid it on His followers to do. “ Ye also shall bear witness to the truth.” Therefore I will provide that ye shall have the Spirit of Truth ; and, “ When He is come, He shall guide you into all truth ; for He shall not speak of Himself ; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak ; and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine, and show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine ; therefore said I, He shall take of Mine, and show it unto you.”<sup>2</sup>

Utterances such as these show clearly enough the vast and unspeakable importance Jesus

<sup>1</sup> John xv. 26, 27.

<sup>2</sup> John xvi, 13-15.

attached to the office and influence of the Holy Spirit in the work of human salvation.

As by that Spirit the way was prepared for the Incarnation, and by His instrumentality, was to a large extent, brought to pass, so when it had actually taken place His work and influence was still needed to make it effectual. In my former volume on the "Spiritual Philosophy" I dwelt at some length on the Consciousness of Jesus, as affording one of the most convincing internal proofs of His Divine Nature. The same remark holds good of those utterances in which He disclosed His intentions with regard to the government of the Church and the propaganda of the Faith after His departure.

Take as an example the following :—

"I left the Father and am come into the world. Again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father." But He added, "I will not leave you desolate; I come unto you."

As though He had said, "I will in My absence take care, that you have another Advocate in My place, Who shall be ever with you to carry on My work. For I am about to set on foot a New Dispensation, even the Dispensation of the Spirit. But the object and purpose is still the same as before."

And of all the sayings of our Lord bearing on this subject none, perhaps, is so brief, and at the same time so enlightening as this, "He



shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you.”<sup>1</sup>

In these few words Jesus shows us what is to be the office and work of the Spirit in the New Dispensation; namely, to beget in all those who are brought under its influence the Christ-like disposition.

But in reality it means nothing less than the practical reproduction and exemplification in the daily life and conversation of the mind which was in Christ Jesus.

Such was the view of St. Paul: “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.”

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,” says the same Apostle.<sup>2</sup> So again St. Peter, to the same effect: “Be all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.”<sup>3</sup>

At the time I am writing (July, 1919), men are talking much about reconstruction after the war; and there is great need for it. But I am convinced that the only sure and permanent basis for reconstruction is that of Christian fellowship between all classes—rich and poor, high and low, employers and employed. All this is so admirably expressed in the *Report* of “The Industrial Christian Fellowship” for the past year that I cannot forbear to quote the passage:—

<sup>1</sup> John xvi. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Phil. ii. 5.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 9.

“The years of strife and suffering are over. And when we count up our losses and gains during the war, we dare to hope that our real and durable gain from it will be the faith of all our people that *Christ is the highest value in the world.*”

God grant that this high ideal may be realized, through the help of the Spirit in the New Dispensation.

#### ON THE RELATION BETWEEN THE INCARNATE WORD AND THE DIVINE SPIRIT

It is by no means easy nor perhaps possible to draw a clear line of distinction between the work and office of the Incarnate Word—the λόγος of St. John—and those of the Divine Spirit, for the sufficient reason, that frequently they seem to be identical, or at least contributory to the same end. Nevertheless, the distinction must be maintained, as on many points their work and offices are distinct and diverse.

#### THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

There is, for example, a tendency to lose sight of the separate Personality of the Spirit and to regard Him as little more than a sacred and sanctifying Influence in the soul. This danger does exist, and must be guarded against.

Perhaps the best and most convincing way of

doing this will be to remind ourselves of the special functions which by our Lord and His Apostles are attributed to the Divine Spirit. We shall find they are almost without exception of a personal character.

I have referred to the promise of Jesus, "He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you," as describing in general terms the work of the Spirit. But there are others of a more specific character which should not be forgotten.

Thus, for example, Jesus in His interview with Nicodemus, spoke of Him as the Agent of the new birth.

(1) "Except a man be born again (*from above*), he cannot see the Kingdom of God."<sup>1</sup>

(2) As *the Great Convincer* of sin and righteousness and judgment.<sup>2</sup>

(3) He is to be both *Teacher and Remembrancer*. "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."<sup>3</sup>

(4) As *Guide and Revealer of Truth*. "He shall guide you into all the truth . . . and He will show you the things to come."<sup>4</sup>

And, in addition to these, we find His rôle of activity still further amplified in other of New Testament Scriptures.

(5) *Helper and Intercessor*. St. Paul speaks of

<sup>1</sup> John iii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> John xvi. 8-11.

<sup>3</sup> John xiv. 26.

<sup>4</sup> John xvi. 13.



Him as "helping our infirmities" and "making intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered."<sup>1</sup>

(6) The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews goes so far as to say, that it was "through the Eternal Spirit that Jesus offered Himself without spot to God."<sup>2</sup>

Other passages there are, too, which without assigning any specific action to the Spirit clearly presuppose His Personality.

Jesus warned His disciples of the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.

"He that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation."<sup>3</sup>

Similarly St. Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." <sup>4</sup>

But in both cases, the sins of *blasphemy* and *grieving* demand a person for their object. We cannot blaspheme a quality, nor grieve even a Christian virtue.

<sup>1</sup> Rom. viii. 26, 27.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. ix. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Mark iii. 29.

<sup>4</sup> Ephes. iv. 3.

## CHAPTER VI

### IMMORTALITY, VIEWED FROM THE STANDPOINT OF CREATIVE EVOLUTION <sup>1</sup>

THE subject of Immortality is one which has recently been attracting a good deal of attention, both in the religious and the philosophic world. And even the present year has witnessed at least one more important contribution to the discussion of the subject.

Nor is this to be wondered at, for the subject is one which comes home to every man, because it concerns every man, whether the life he is now living on earth is to cease at his death, or whether in some form or other it is to be prolonged throughout the ages of eternity.

In the 'Apostles' Creed the doctrine of Immortality, "the life everlasting," forms the last article of the Catholic Faith. Moreover, it follows immediately after the doctrine of "the resurrection of the body," leading us to infer that the two are inseparably connected, and should not be considered apart. But, however this may

<sup>1</sup> This paper was read at a meeting of the Working Men's Guild of the Gainsborough Parish Church in 1919.

be, I wish to say that it is not the subject of the resurrection of the body, but only that of the continued life of the soul or spirit of man after death, that I propose to discuss in the present chapter.

Moreover, I wish to point out that there are two standpoints from which we may regard our subject, and from which we may approach its consideration. First, the standpoint of Creative Evolution, and secondly, that of Christian Revelation. In the present chapter, it will only be possible to consider the first of these two standpoints, that of Creative Evolution. And to that, therefore, I respectfully invite my readers' attention.

Now, if Immortality be the continuation of Life, it is above all things desirable we should endeavour to form as clear and correct a conception of what Life is as possible, and especially of that example of it exhibited in the personality of man.

### WHAT IS LIFE?

What then is Life? As to its nature and main characteristic, I do not think we can find a truer and more comprehensive definition than that adopted by Prof. Bergson,<sup>1</sup> and now generally accepted, I believe, by the foremost students of science and metaphysics in the present day—*Life is Consciousness.*

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter III., Part I.



The Professor asks, where does consciousness begin, and where does it stop? "In ourselves it is bound up in some way with a brain." But this answer, he proceeds to point out, is not sufficient. In ourselves it is true, but as we descend the animal scale, we see the brain becomes more or less simplified, until the nervous elements become merged in the mass of (apparently) undifferentiated living tissue. And then consciousness itself is diffused in the whole of this mass, so that in the end consciousness might exist in Nature wherever there is living matter.

Even an amœba, one of the lowest forms of vital activity, possesses a certain amount of consciousness, as the late Prof. Romanes had previously proved by actual observation. "When anything that can be converted into food floats by, it throws out protoplasmic filaments which draw the substance into itself."

Every vital organism appears to be more or less conscious. And this is true in the vegetable, as well as in the animal world, for all attempts to define the limits between the two have failed.

But this definition of Life as Consciousness, though true and useful as defining the most characteristic feature of all life, is clearly insufficient for our present purpose, which is to consider Immortality from the standpoint of Creative Evolution. It is insufficient, because it ignores two most important points, both the Creation of

Life, and its gradual development under the method of Evolution.

I would suggest, therefore, that the following addenda be made to M. Bergson's definition of Life as Consciousness.

(1) "All life is a form of Divine Energy, and is due to the influence of the Immanent Spirit of God, Who is the Author and Giver of Life, in Nature and the Universe.

(2) "Moreover, it is evident, that the method adopted by God in the creation and development of Life and Consciousness has been that of Evolution."

If the truth of these two statements be admitted, we shall at once be able to pursue our inquiry as to the nature of Immortality.

The claim, indeed, is not inconsiderable, and it is one which all will not be prepared to admit, as, for example, our modern Sadducees and Materialists. But I scarcely expect to have these amongst my readers. And so for the rest I am inclined to think I shall have their assent to both propositions, as being in accordance with the teaching of the Spiritual Philosophy on the one hand, and the results of scientific research on the other.

Bergson, it is true, is content to speak of life, in regard to its origin, as *Elan vital* (= a sudden vital thrust or emotion), an expression which commits him to nothing ; but, that there is in the background of his mind a conviction, that the *Elan*

proceeds from a spiritual, *i.e.* a Divine, source, I do not doubt, from what he afterwards says as to the only worthy end and object of Philosophy.

And now, bearing in mind these three statements, regarding the nature of Life : that (1) its essential and characteristic feature is consciousness ; that (2) its efficient cause and source is the Immanent Spirit of God ; that (3) its method of growth and development is evolutionary ; my next object is to indicate very briefly the successive steps in the evolutionary process, whereby the vital organism has continuously advanced to more perfect development, and consequently to higher degrees and values of consciousness.

### THE WITNESS OF BIOLOGY

In biology we see how the gradual evolution of the bodily faculties has supplied the sense organs, which bring the organism into touch with its environment, and beget sensuous percepts and a corresponding rudimentary consciousness, or *awareness* of its surroundings. Then, as the mental and metaphysical faculties are evolved, these *percepts* beget *concepts*, and are translated into their corresponding *noumena*, or spiritual realities.

### DEVELOPMENT OF CONSCIOUSNESS BY THE PROCESS OF CREATIVE EVOLUTION

In a former volume I have endeavoured to indicate the principal steps in the gradual development



of Consciousness under the method of Creative Evolution.

1. In the first and lowest stage of all (the *protozoa*, *infusoria*, *amœbæ*, and the like) Consciousness is only just beginning to rise above reflex action. There is Consciousness, but only of the most rudimentary kind.

2. In the next stage, which I would understand as embracing every form of animal life, up to but excluding man, we find Consciousness combined with instinct and intelligence; with instinct as exemplified to a perfectly marvellous degree in the *arthropods*, and intelligence in a similar, though perhaps not to an equal extent, in the *vertebrates*.

3. But it is not till we come to man, the *genus homo*, that Consciousness assumes the higher form of Self-consciousness. This advance, I would venture to suggest, is the result of the reflex action of the mind. The intelligent psychic mind turns at length to the contemplation of itself as the object of its regard, with the result that the psychè or animal mind, hitherto conscious of its environment only, now awakes to the consciousness of itself as a separate spiritual entity.

Whether, or not, this be the true explanation, the Spiritual Philosophy would teach us to regard this upward movement as due to the same cause as the rest of Creative Evolution, namely, the

Immanent Spirit of God, Who is the only Source and Giver of Life.<sup>1</sup>

This step in the upward progress of the human species, from Consciousness to Self-consciousness, is one of the utmost importance and significance.

### THE BIRTH OF THE SOUL

Not only does it form the dividing line, which separates mankind from all inferior ranks of animal life; but it opens the door, so to speak, which admits him into the sphere of moral and spiritual truth and reality.

The soul is born through the afflatus of the Holy Spirit. It becomes an individual personality; conscious of moral and metaphysical distinctions, of good and evil, right and wrong, truth and falsehood.

But the acquisition of this discriminating faculty only prepares the way for a further development of moral and spiritual consciousness.

If, on the one hand, it points to the objective reality of these distinctions and antitheses, on the other hand, it provides the opportunity, we might almost say the necessity, for the exercise of the further moral faculties of choice and will.

A man must judge for himself which of the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. "But there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding."—Job xxxii. 8.

And again—

Cf. Job xxxiii. 4: "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the Breath of the Almighty hath given me life."

alternatives presented to him in his environment he ought to accept and follow.

#### THE BIRTH OF CONSCIENCE AND THE SENSE OF DUTY

Thus the sense of *duty*, which for convenience we call Conscience, is evolved, and man becomes in a greater degree a moral and responsible Agent. His consciousness acquires a higher value, for henceforth he possesses an internal Monitor, which, though it may sometimes err through ignorance, is ever pointing, like the mariner's compass, to the pole-star of truth. It is the faculty or principle, says Dr. Murray (New Eng. Dict.) "which pronounces upon the moral quality of one's actions and motives, approving the right and condemning the wrong. And the prevalent tendency of philosophic thought to-day is to personify *Conscience* as 'The Deity in my bosom.'" At the same time, it affords the standing, and perhaps the strongest witness to the presence and power of the Immanent Spirit of God, working in the soul of man through Creative Evolution.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF THE RELIGIOUS INSTINCT

Nor is this all. From the consciousness of his environment in Nature and the Universe, man rises to the concept of a Being who is its Author and Sustainer. He recognizes his own individual personality, and his reason leads him to demand



the existence of a Parent Spirit, similar, but infinitely superior to his own.

Thus the religious instinct is implanted and begins to develop, as is shown in such an exemplary manner in the ancient Accadian and Babylonian sacred literature.<sup>1</sup>

Man has become a religious creature. And from this point he sets forth on the upward road, which, through ever increasing consciousness, will bring him into closer contact and communion with God.

Such is the soul, and such the self-conscious personality of man as it has been gradually developed under the process of Creative Evolution ; such its present capacities, and such the future possibilities which await it in the life to come.

To that life of ever growing consciousness no limits can be assigned ; for God, Who is Infinite Consciousness, will be Himself both its inexhaustible Source and Object.

Life is Consciousness. It is like a golden chain, which, if I may be allowed the poetic phrase, " binds all creation round the feet of God."

And now, let us turn at length to consider very briefly the bearing of all this discussion on the great question before us, namely, the soul, the continued life of man beyond the grave.

<sup>1</sup> Speaking of this literature in his addresses on " Evolution and the Holy Scriptures," Dr. J. M. Wilson thus writes : " There is in their sacred books, a sense of sin, a conviction of the presence of God, a craving for forgiveness, a yearning after God which is scarcely surpassed in any of the Penitential Psalms " (p. 84).

Can we suppose that such a being, so highly gifted, is doomed to perish at death and be extinguished like the snuff of a candle burnt down to the socket? Is this to be the end of the age-long process of Evolution? To my mind such a thought appears alike dishonourable to God and fatal to the brightest hopes and noblest aspirations of man.

What that life of the soul may be in the next world we dare not presume to say. But this at least seems probable in the highest degree; it will present more points of similarity to the life of the soul in this world than many of us imagine. It will be a life of continued activity in the service of God, of clearer vision, and ever increasing consciousness of His attributes of truth and love. "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty," and the *Via hominis* shall end in the *Visio Dei*.

In my next chapter I shall deal with the subject of Immortality, as viewed from the Standpoint of Christian Revelation.

## CHAPTER VII

### IMMORTALITY REGARDED FROM THE CHRISTIAN STANDPOINT

THE body and soul of man are so closely connected and inter-related under the method and process of Creative Evolution in this life that it is difficult to believe this union will be entirely dissolved in the life to come. In the Christian Creed they are likewise closely connected as the last two articles of the Catholic Faith. I propose, therefore, to consider them both in the order in which they are placed in the Apostles' Creed.

My object in the last chapter, stated briefly, was to show the extreme improbability that man, who represents the highest value attained under the age-long process of Creative Evolution, was destined to extinction at death. The idea that the soul, which is a personal spirit, capable of abstract thought, of metaphysical and moral distinctions, of communion with the Spirit of God Himself, should become as though it had never been, is well-nigh unthinkable.

My object in the present chapter is to ascertain, if possible, how this subject of Immortality should be regarded under the light of the Spiritual Philosophy and the Christian Revelation.



But the subject is one so vast and mysterious, and has so many ramifications and side issues, that to deal with it *in extenso* and detail within the limits of a single chapter is out of the question. I shall therefore confine my remarks to the two following heads of inquiry :

1st. What was the current belief which prevailed amongst the orthodox Jews at the time of our Saviour's Incarnation and earthly ministry, and how came it into existence ?

I say the orthodox Jews, because, as is well known, there was a school or sect of Jewish rabbis, the Sadducees, who flatly denied not only the Resurrection, but even the existence of angels and spirits.<sup>1</sup>

2nd. How these previous views and beliefs were modified and expanded under the teaching of Jesus, until they finally became crystallized in the doctrine of the Resurrection as held and taught by the Catholic Church.

#### THE WITNESS OF THE CANONICAL BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Before citing any specific texts and passages I wish to make this general observation, that the two subjects of Immortality and Resurrection must not be considered as necessarily and inseparately connected and as involving each

<sup>1</sup> Matt xxii. 23 ; Acts xxxiii. 8.

other. The fact is, that while there are many passages which clearly imply a current belief in the deathless nature of the soul or spirit of man, there are remarkably few which point with unequivocal clearness to a belief in the resurrection of the body.

The following passages will serve to illustrate the truth of this remark.

*Some passages which imply a belief in the immortal  
life of the soul*

“Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and after that receive me with glory.

“Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none that I desire in comparison of Thee.

“My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever” (Ps. lxxiii. 24–26).

“Thou wilt not leave my soul to sheol; neither wilt Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption. In Thy presence is the fulness of joy: and at Thy right hand are pleasures for evermore” (Ps. xvi. 10, 11; cf. also Ps. xlix. 14, 15).

*Passages which seem to show that when they were  
written no hope or expectation of a resurrection of  
the body was entertained*

“What profit is there in my blood: when I go down to the pit?

“Shall the dead give thanks unto Thee : or shall it declare Thy truth ? ” (Ps. xxx. 9-10).

“The dead praise not Thee, O God : neither any that go down into silence ” (Ps. cxv. 17).

Eccles. xi. 9 and xii. 7 throw considerable light on the current belief respecting death and immortality at that time.

“The dust,” *i.e.* the body, “shall return to the earth as it was,” but “the spirit shall return unto God Who gave it.”

Ver. 9 : “Yet know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment,” *i.e.* in the existence of the soul after death.

It is true that in Isaiah xxvi. 19 we find a passage which by some is thought to foretell a resurrection of the body.

“Thy dead shall live ; my dead bodies shall arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust : for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast forth the dead.”

But the context seems to show that only a metaphorical and figurative interpretation must be put on the passages, as descriptive of the social, moral and religious regeneration of Israel.

Indeed, it is not till we come to the time of the Prophet Daniel, about 169 B.C., that we find a passage clearly predictive of a Resurrection of the dead.

“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life,



and some to shame and everlasting contempt” (Dan. xii. 2).

### WITNESS OF THE APOCRYPHA

And now let us look into the witness of the Apocrypha and the Apocalyptical literature to these two great doctrines of the Christian Faith.

“But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them.

“In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die, . . . but they are in peace.

“For, though they be punished in the sight of men, yet is their hope full of immortality” (Wisdom of Solomon iii. 1–9).

“Thou like a fury takest us out of this present life, but the King of the world shall raise us up, who have died for His laws, unto everlasting life” (2 Maccabees vii. 9).

### THE APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE

This literature dates from second century B.C. to first century A.D., and comprises the Books of Baruch, Enoch, four Books of Esdras, and many others.

“The Apocalyptic literature, unlike the Old Testament, lays considerable stress on punishments after death. Various views have been held as to the duration of such punishments; but it

is not clear either, whether such expressions as 'for ever,' 'eternal,' etc., mean 'everlasting,' or whether these punishments are to end in extinction, or to be of a purgative nature and lead to restoration of the sinner to the favour of God."<sup>1</sup>

Only a few short extracts are possible in this place :—

Drunkards are warned that they are "surrendering themselves to the eternal fire" (3 Baruch iv. 16).

In the following passage the Messiah summons all nations before Him. "Some of them He shall spare, and some of them He shall slay. . . . Every nation which knows not Israel and has not trodden down Jacob shall be spared. But all those who have known you, or have ruled over you, shall be given to the sword" (2 Baruch lxxii.).

In Enoch x. 5, "for ever," with reference to punishment, stands for seventy generations; while in ver. 10 "eternal life" denotes five hundred years. In Enoch xix. 1, Fallen angels are to be judged until they are "made an end of," and "no trace of them shall ever more be found." But sometimes these fiery torments endure for ever.

The Almighty puts "fire and worms on the flesh of oppressors, and they shall weep and feel their pain for ever."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See "Immortality," Chap. V., on the Bible and Hell, by Rev. C. W. Emmet.

<sup>2</sup> Judith xvi. 17; *cf.* Enoch viii. 3.

Sometimes, and not infrequently, such punishment is depicted as leading the sufferers to repentance. Thus in Enoch lxvii. 9, "in proportion as the burning of their bodies becomes severe, a corresponding change shall take place in their spirit for ever and ever"; and 4 Esdras ix. 12, those who have defied the Law during the time of repentance "must be brought to know after death by torment."

#### AN EVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT

It would seem, then, that in respect to both these doctrines of the Immortality of the Soul and the Resurrection of the Body, an evolutionary process had been at work, as Dr. Oesterley points out <sup>1</sup>—

(1) The first stage was a development of the O.T. conception of Sheol, which gave rise to the belief in the immortality of the spirit or soul.

(2) The second was that to which the hope or expectation of the Messianic Kingdom gave rise. This kingdom was to be an earthly kingdom of endless duration, and could only be realized through a bodily resurrection.

(3) The third stage was when the Kingdom of Heaven was conceived not as an earthly but a spiritual kingdom "eternal in the heavens

<sup>1</sup> "The Books of the Apocrypha."



above," and for which an immortal spirit or soul was necessary.

### MAZDAISM

Nor is it difficult to assign at least one cause which may probably have exerted considerable influence on this evolutionary development.

During the seventy years of their captivity in Babylon and the East the Jews were brought into contact with Mazdaism, that is with Persian or Zoroastrian religion, one of whose doctrines was that of the Resurrection of the Dead.

"For this agreement between Mazdaism and the Jewish religion," says the Rev. J. Milner,<sup>1</sup> "we were prepared by knowing that around the sources of the Euphrates, ere Abraham crossed the river and became a Hebrew, his kindred and the Aryans lived side by side. Many centuries afterwards, when in altered circumstances, Jews in Babylon met Persians and regarded them as their masters and best friends, this renewed contact made Judaism conscious of the outer world, and conscious of herself; aware of what others had, and she had once possessed, but had not well used. Judaism was quickened and enriched. Not formerly devoted to the worship of one God—sent, say the Prophets, into banishment for worshipping many gods—the Jews

<sup>1</sup> "Faiths of the World," p. 143.

returning from Babylon acknowledged, like the Persians, only one. Loftier views of Jehovah's greatness brought more into play angels and archangels, His messengers—and guardian angels, His continuous instruments. . . . A coming Messiah, a personal resurrection, the restoration of all things, were henceforth popular articles of the Jewish Creed." Again, "the Mazdean's idea of the Resurrection, glorified man's body as his eternal companion; and his view of heaven, presenting a continuance of his present life, reflected honour on his earthly lot, and made it his first object to lead well the life he had."<sup>1</sup>

#### THE PREVALENT BELIEF AT THE TIME OF CHRIST

Let us now inquire: (1) What was the prevailing belief as to the Resurrection and Immortality amongst the Jews at the time of our Lord? and (2) What was His teaching with respect to them?

With regard to the first question, we know there were two schools or sects, whose views were diametrically opposed, the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The latter were what we should call the Materialists of their day. For they did not believe either in the Resurrection of the body or the continued life of the soul after death.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Faiths of the World," p. 135.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxii. 29-32. Josephus says ("Bell. Jud.," II. viii. 14), "The Pharisees taught the incorruptibility of the soul. The

But while there existed this great discrepancy on these two important doctrines, it would seem that the belief in both was general amongst the great body of Jewish worshippers. I gather this from the reply of Martha to the assurance of Jesus, "Thy brother shall rise again" (John xi. 23, 24): "I know that He shall rise again in the Resurrection at the last day."

Such being the case the next question for us to consider is this :

(2) What was the teaching of Jesus? And what were the proofs, arguments or guarantees He gave to His followers and the world of the truth of His teaching?

In the first place, assuming that His words have been correctly reported, He clearly foretold that there should be a resurrection of the dead.

"For the hour cometh in which all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done ill unto the resurrection of judgment" (R.V.).

But the most convincing proof of all was His own Resurrection, which He definitely foretold.<sup>1</sup> "Because I live ye shall live also."

Sadducees did not believe in the immortal duration of the soul, and the rewards and punishments in Hades." "The souls die with the bodies," quoted by Dr. Oesterley in "Books of the Apocrypha," p. 146. See, however, p. 147, where it would seem that the Sadducees only denied the resurrection of the body, not the immortality of the soul.

<sup>1</sup> "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again."



And such was Paul's great argument in writing to the Corinthians (1 Cor. xv. 12-20) :

"How say some among you there is no resurrection of the dead? But, if there be no resurrection of the dead, neither hath Christ been raised. But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of them that are asleep."

In short, the Resurrection of Jesus, which was received by Paul and the early Christians as an undoubted fact, became to them the pledge and assurance of the general resurrection of the dead, and led to that doctrine being accepted as one of the fundamental articles of the Catholic Faith.<sup>1</sup>

### MATERIALISM

And as there were Sadducees to guard against in His day, who denied the Resurrection, and afterwards, in St. Paul's time, who said it was past already, so now there are those amongst us who out-do them in seeking to explain and account for all the facts and circumstances of human life, moral, mental, psychic and spiritual, on a materialistic basis, and by the operation of material causes.

I shrink from calling such materialism a philosophy. For it is unworthy of the name. A

<sup>1</sup> Paul's second argument, drawn from the analogy of the seed sown, dying and springing up again (1 Cor. xv. 36-39), is not without its difficulty; inasmuch as the vital germ does not die and perish, but becomes the nucleus of a new plant.

system which ignores the highest value and product of Creative Evolution, namely, the self-consciousness and conscious personality of man, represents to my mind the very bathos of philosophy. And they who espouse it are degrading man to a level but one step above that of the beasts which perish. They are without God, and have no hope beyond that of the present ephemeral existence : "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." For with the destruction of the personal soul perishes also the hope of immortality.

#### JESUS AND IMMORTALITY

As the Resurrection of Jesus is the pledge and assurance of our own, so the life of Jesus is the source and mainspring of our hope and expectation of "the life everlasting" in the world to come. Nay, is it too much to say, that they will survive or perish with faith in the Incarnation of Jesus ?

The reply of Jesus to Martha (John xi. 25, 26), at the tomb of Lazarus, was full of deep spiritual significance. He turned her thoughts upon Himself, "I Who speak to you am both the Resurrection and the Life eternal." And then, by way of explaining this mysterious utterance, He added, "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live ; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

She had thought of the resurrection as an event too remote to administer comfort in her present distress. His answer was intended to remove this misapprehension, "I, and none beside Me, am the Resurrection, and the Life"; not merely a life in the remoteness of the last day,<sup>1</sup> but even here and now.

Moreover, his further words, "He that believeth . . . shall never die," must surely mean, I think, that it is by faith, and entering into spiritual union with Jesus, that we shall realize Him to be in truth both "the Resurrection and the Life eternal."

### REINCARNATION

There are those, I know, who believe in Reincarnation; that when a man dies his spirit or soul does not return to "the God who gave it," and become discarnate, but enters into the body of some other creature, animal or man, therein to commence a new life. And this mode of transmigration is supposed to go on until Karma is reached.<sup>2</sup>

I, too, believe in a Reincarnation. But it is one which commences here and now; which

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Ellicott, *in loco*.

<sup>2</sup> Neither time nor space permit me to follow up this subject. Those who wish to see it discussed at greater length I would direct to the volume on "Immortality," by B. H. Streeter and others. Chap. VIII.



found its origin and prototype when the Divine Word (*Logos*) was conceived by the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, and the two natures, the Divine and human, were united; a Reincarnation which is repeated in each of the followers of Jesus, when by the operation of the same Spirit, the soul is born from above (*ἀνωθεν*),<sup>1</sup> and is made "a partaker of the Divine nature."

"Marvel not that I said unto you, Ye must be born again."

Of such a Reincarnation the Apostle Paul was both the recipient and example.

"I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."<sup>2</sup>

#### THE MEANS PROVIDED

For such a change Jesus Himself was careful to provide the means, when He instituted the Sacrament of His Body and Blood. "He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day" (John vi. 54).

For this, too, He prayed in His great High Priestly prayer (John xvii. 22, 23): "That they all may be one, even as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be in us."

The Incarnation, then, is the groundwork of the Christian's hope and assurance, both of the

<sup>1</sup> John iii. 5; 2 Pet. i. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. ii. 20. And ep. iv. 19, "until Christ be formed in you."

Resurrection of the Body and the Immortality of the Soul. "Because I live ye shall live also," and "If the Spirit of Him that raised Jesus dwell in you, He that raised up Jesus Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you."

In this spiritual union with Christ and through Christ with God, Creative Evolution would seem to attain its maximum value, and the Spiritual Philosophy the justification and fulfilment of its highest claim.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

It now only remains for me to indicate as briefly as possible the objects I have had ever before me in compiling and publishing this volume.

Generally speaking my aim has been to justify and establish the claims of the Spiritual Philosophy to furnish us with the only true and satisfactory theory of Life and Being.

But, while this has been my chief and general aim, it was evident from the outset that even the attempt to secure it must of necessity involve the introduction and discussion of other subsidiary problems and side issues, which are closely connected with, even if they do not form part of it. And it will be in the consideration of these subsidiary topics that such interest as my book may possess will chiefly be found.

Starting from Nature, as our first teacher in respect to the Being of God, I was led on to regard Him under the two-fold aspect of Transcendancy and Immanence.



The whole Universe, and all that we understand by the term Nature, may be truly described as the Body of God, infinite like Himself, the expression of His power, and instinct with His Presence.

He is the One and only Source of all life and energy; and Creative Evolution is His method of Self-manifestation.

Nay. May we not go further, and regard it as that divinely ordered process which directs the stream of life and consciousness—the *Elan vital* of M. Bergson—back again to the Source from which at first it took its rise in the ocean of Infinite Love?

As all Life is the gift of God, so Creative Evolution is His method for perfecting His gift, and endowing it with ever increasing values, until at length, through the work of the Incarnate *Logos* and the dispensation of the Spirit of Truth, it becomes fitted for union and communion with the Divine Being Himself.

In the Second Part of this book we have been compelled to recognize, though we have not attempted to explain, the timeless mystery of the Great Antinomy, that is, the ceaseless conflict between the spiritual Powers of Good and Evil. We have traced its baleful effect, when the life of man became the battle-ground of its activity, and the soul of man the prize for which the opposing forces were contending.

In the Call of Abram, and the fulfilment of the Promise to him, in the Incarnation and the gift of the Holy Spirit, we behold the means which God, in His love for man, has provided for destroying the work of the Evil One, and restoring mankind once more, if they will, to His favour and loving-kindness.

“ Rivers to the ocean run,  
Nor stay in all their course ;  
Fire ascending seeks the sun,  
Both speed them to their source.

So the soul that's born of God,  
Pants to see His heavenly Face,  
Upwards tends to His abode  
To rest in His embrace.”

Such, as I conceive it, is the Spiritual Philosophy, and as such I have endeavoured to interpret it. How imperfectly I have succeeded, no one is more conscious than myself. Let me add but one word more. I would not have undertaken the task, had it not been for the firm conviction that this is the one true Philosophy which can lay under tribute all philosophy, all science, art and religion in the service of God and man.

#### SOME SUPPLEMENTARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

At the present time a great wave of unsettlement, and discontent with former ideals, seems to be sweeping over the face of society, and taking possession of men's minds both in regard to religion and politics.

We are told by some, that nothing short of a New Teacher, and a New Religion, will suffice to satisfy the want thus felt and expressed.

What has the Spiritual Philosophy to say to this demand ?

This much I venture to think : If Christianity is a religion of Divine origin and inspiration, it can never be superseded or become effete. But nevertheless it may need to be cleansed and revived by a fresh outpouring of the Spirit of truth and love. It is here, I am convinced, where we must look for, and find that power and influence which is to regenerate humanity and carry it forward to the attainment of the Divine ideal of Christ, "that they all may be One ; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be One in Us." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John xvii. 21.



## ADDENDUM

### PROFESSOR EINSTEIN'S DISCOVERY

WHAT was this discovery which Professor Einstein claims to have made by his careful astronomical observations? Stated in the briefest possible terms, it was that the rays of light from two stars in the constellation of the Bull, Kappa One and Kappa Two, in their passage to the earth did not proceed in a straight line, but were bent as they passed in their course near the sun. The discovery is said to have upset every star-map in the world, and brought something akin to consternation into our observatories. Why should it have done so? Because it seems to show that light is a ponderable substance, that can be weighed, and is therefore subject to the attraction of gravitation, like all other ponderable substances. If this be really the case, then certain inferences of great importance must be drawn from it. The first is, that the Undulatory Theory of light, which has been accepted in the scientific world for the last century, must be abandoned, and give way to that favoured by Sir Isaac Newton, namely, the Corpuscular Theory.

The second is said to be the disappearance of the ether; the existence of which no one has been able to prove, and the nature of which none could explain. It would seem to have been no more than a scientific postulate, invented to support a theory, which is now proved to be false.

The third inference as conjectured by some is that it will have an effect in modifying the current ideas of Time and Space; that Time and Space can no longer be regarded as things possessing an absolute value, but are only relative to an undiscovered Reality in the background.

For my part, I think it is too early to accept any of these

inferences. It will surely be wiser to await the result of further investigation, and see whether the claims made on their behalf can be substantiated. But whether proved true or false, I do not imagine they can have any serious effect in disturbing the foundation on which the fabric of the Spiritual Philosophy is erected.

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